

## BOOKS BY WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN

GOD AT WORK: A Study of the Supernatural

PATHWAYS TO CERTAINTY

BELIEFS THAT MATTER

THE LIFE OF PRAYER IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

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THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN OUTLINE

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

**THE CHURCH**  
**CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT**



# THE CHURCH

## CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT

A Study of  
Differences That Matter

By  
William Adams Brown, Ph.D., D.D.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
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A

TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
CHARLES HENRY BRENT  
BISHOP IN  
THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
PRIEST OF  
THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL



## PREFACE

This is a book about the Christian Church. It has grown out of the author's conviction that the church, in the familiar sense of the institution of religion, deserves a greater place in the loyalty and affection of Christians than is given it by many American Protestants today. Unless this is done not only will the faith of the individual Christian be deprived of its normal source of nourishment and inspiration but Christianity itself as a world-conquering religion will fail to maintain itself successfully against the rival faiths by which its claim to universal supremacy is being every day more aggressively challenged.

I know only too well that this statement runs counter to the prevailing trend of popular opinion. Only recently a book has appeared<sup>1</sup> by a well-known American philosopher in which the thesis is maintained that institutional religion in all its forms is negligible, not to say deleterious. What matters in religion, and the only thing that matters, the writer says in effect, is not what we believe or how we worship in detail, but the sincerity and idealism which we carry into whatever we do. In saying this he is expressing a conviction which is shared by many of our contemporaries. Nevertheless with full recogni-

<sup>1</sup> Dewey, John, *A Common Faith*, New Haven, 1934.

tion of all that is true in Professor Dewey's criticism of the faults of the church, I believe that in his central thesis he is wrong and that those who follow him in his indifference to the symbols and institutions of historic religion are destined to a painful disillusionment.

It is ground for encouragement, therefore, that in many quarters a renewed sense of the importance of institutional religion is making itself felt. During the past three years the author has travelled widely not only in Europe but in Asia and has talked with Christians of many different countries and branches of the church; and everywhere he has found a sense of bewilderment and isolation, the consciousness that face to face with the gigantic forces of the modern world the individual by himself can do little or nothing.

What is true of individuals is true also of groups and of movements. Those with whom I have talked have been many of them officials and active workers in the church: ministers and missionaries, secretaries and editors. The work they do is important; they believe in it with all their heart; but it is limited, a fragment which by itself must remain forever incomplete. Everywhere I have found men who are feeling their way after something more comprehensive, more commanding. That larger and more satisfying whole I believe can be supplied, and supplied only, by the Christian Church.

It is natural, therefore, as it is timely, that the attention of churchmen should be turning again to the consideration of the ways in which a united church

may be achieved. It is not only the proposed reassembling in 1937 of the World Conferences on Faith and Order and on Life and Work which explains this. It is the conviction that the issues with which these Conferences will have to deal are important issues, that the question of the reunion of the severed branches of Christ's church is not simply a matter of concern to Christians, but that it may mean much for the future of civilization.

I believe that this conviction is well founded, but only upon one condition. We must perceive that the question of the unity of the church is not simply or even primarily a question of ecclesiastical organization but of the possibility, more than this, of the present reality, of a common Christian life. It is not the existence side by side of so many independent and self-governing churches that is disturbing. It is the fact that these reflect and perpetuate attitudes toward religion which hinder spiritual fellowship and inhibit common action. Unless those who are working for the unity of the church address themselves to this central and dominating issue, their meeting will be in vain.

X Is there in reality a common Christian life, a unifying Christian faith? Here is the one question on which all turns. X

This explains the title of my book: "The Church: Catholic and Protestant." I use the words not in the conventional sense to describe particular ecclesiastical organizations, but in the deeper sense, presently to be more fully explained, of contrasted types of Christian

faith and experience. That there are contrasted types, none who know contemporary religion can question. That Catholics and Protestants differ not only in organization, but in the quality of their inner life, is patent. But there is another fact equally incontrovertible: that Catholics and Protestants alike call themselves Christians, that both ~~alike~~ own the same Master, read the same Bible, worship the same God, aspire after the same holiness. Is the unity to which these common experiences and loyalties point great enough to make the church in fact and not simply in word one?

I believe that it is. Great as are the differences between Catholics and Protestants the things which they have in common are still more important. If the discussion that follows shall suggest ways in which this existing spiritual unity may find expression in common action, the main purpose of this book will have been accomplished.

It remains only to acknowledge my indebtedness to the many friends who have helped me in the preparation of this volume: to Professor Sergius Bulgakoff, who has read the sections on Orthodox Christianity; to Doctor Michael Williams, who has read the parts which deal with Roman Catholicism; to President Henry Sloane Coffin, who has read the sections which deal with Protestantism; to my colleagues and fellow-students, Dean Henry Pitney Van Dusen, Doctor Cyril Richardson, Mr. William N. Pittenger, and Mr. A. T. Mollegen, who have read the proofs; and to my secretary, Miss Maude

M. Dolan, who has helped me with the Index. To all of these I owe helpful criticism and suggestions. It is needless to say that for the opinions expressed I alone am responsible.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,  
NEW YORK.  
January, 1935.





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**THE CHURCH**  
**CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT**





## *INTRODUCTION*

### CHAPTER I

#### WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON THE CHURCH?

1. By Way of Introduction.
2. Twilight or Dawn?
3. Purpose of the Present Book.

*With the growing sense of the helplessness of the individual in the face of the far-reaching social changes which have resulted from the War, the need is making itself increasingly felt of some unifying agency through which the faith of Christians can be brought to bear effectively upon the major social issues of our time. Such an agency, were it really united, the Christian Church might be.*

*Yet in fact we find Christians divided in their view both of the nature and of the function of the church, and these differences are rooted in contrasted types of faith and of experience. The most significant of these differences is that which separates Catholics and Protestants, terms used in this book not primarily to designate the ecclesiastical bodies which bear the name, but the types of religious experience of which they are the outgrowth and expression. Yet great as are the differences which separate Catholics and Protestants, not only in their theory of the church, but in the quality of their religious life, these differences are consistent with the conviction that in the deepest sense the church of Christ is already one; and this conviction is finding expression in many forms of spiritual sympathy and of practical co-operation.*

*(This contrast between the things which unite and the things which divide is the reason for the present book. Are the things which unite Catholics and Protestants as Christians really more important than the things which separate them? If this be granted, is it possible to give this deeper unity such expression in corporate action that the church of Christ shall become in fact the unifying agency so sorely needed? These are the questions to which this book is devoted.*

## 1. BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

This is a book about the church—its nature, its importance, and the place that it ought to hold in the life of the individual and in society as a whole. More especially it will have to do with the different views of the church which separate Protestants from Catholics. These, to be sure, are not the only differences which separate Christians, but they are incomparably the most important, and it is the duty of every sincere Christian—I will go further and say of every one who feels the seriousness of the present social crisis—to understand them. For upon the extent and accuracy of our understanding will depend our ability to deal with them in the right way.

Both Catholics and Protestants believe in the necessity for the church and in its indispensable contribution to religion. Both believe that in God's plan the church is one, and that this unity should find visible expression. ~~But they differ so widely as to the nature of the church's unity and as to the means through which it should be expressed that at many points they are unable to work and, what is even more important, to worship together.~~ Thus the influence of the church is weakened and its claim to bring an authoritative message from God fails to carry conviction. Where the creed speaks of one Holy Catholic Church, men see a number of independent—often of rival and competing—churches,

## 6 WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON THE CHURCH?

and the contrast between profession and practice gives both to sermon and to prayer an air of unreality.

When life was simpler and conditions more stable, it was easy to overlook the seriousness of this situation. The little world in which most of us were living—our community, our business, the circle, narrower or wider, of our friends and acquaintances—proved spacious enough to occupy our interest and engross our thought. That there was a wider world we knew of course, for the newspapers were constantly bringing it to our notice. There was China, with its famines and its bandits; there was Japan, with its imperialistic ambition; there was Latin America, with its revolutions; there was India, with its teeming millions, where a strange figure called Gandhi was already beginning to win attention by his novel doctrine of non-resistance. We knew of Africa because Albert Schweitzer had put it on the map by his quixotic mission to the sufferers from the sleeping sickness, while nearer still there was Europe with its world-old culture, its national rivalries, and its economic wars. But the things that happened in these countries concerned us only indirectly as they affected the value of the dollar or the price of our imports. At most they gave us something exciting to read about, as we would read the latest novel or book of travel. To people who were living in such a world the unity of the church was only a name. By the church we meant the congregation in which we worshipped, or the denomination to which we belonged,

or at most, if our sympathies were unusually wide, the mission to which we contributed. It took the World War, with its cataclysmic dislocations, to dislodge us from our isolation and to make us realize that we were in fact, and not simply in name, members of one another. Places that had been simply dots on the map now acquired intimate personal associations, and little crosses in France reminded travellers that national interest knows no geographical frontier.

This newly awakened international consciousness had its effects in the field of religion. As the new sense of political solidarity found expression in the League of Nations, so the expanding religious consciousness found organs in the world conferences of Stockholm and of Lausanne. Across the lake from the Palace of the League of Nations on the Quai Wilson, the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work had its modest office in the Rue de Montchoisy; and in its rooms from week to week there gathered representatives of various organizations which, each in its own way, tried to give expression to the universal aspects of the Christian religion. For a time it seemed as if the dream that inspired those who met at Stockholm in 1925 might come true: "Responding to Christ's call 'Follow me,' we have in the presence of the Cross accepted the urgent duty of applying his gospel in all realms of human life: industrial, social, political, and international."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bell, G. K. A., *The Stockholm Conference on Life and Work* (Oxford, 1926), p. 711.

## 8 WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON THE CHURCH?

The years that have passed have brought their disillusioning experiences. The bright hopes entertained for the League have not been justified in fact. Japan has given notice of withdrawal, and now Germany. Russia, to be sure, has recently joined, but the United States still holds aloof. With three of the most powerful nations refusing even the modest measure of co-operation involved in League membership, how oppose any barrier to the rising tide of nationalism?

In this new setting the question of the unity of the church acquires fresh significance. It is no longer possible to repeat the words: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" without becoming conscious of the contrast between our creed and our conduct. Either we must take our profession more seriously and make the unity of the church our personal concern, or else we must confess that in religion, as well as in politics, the barriers that separate us are insurmountable.

### 2. TWILIGHT OR DAWN?

Many now adopt the latter alternative. In the political sphere they have definitely abandoned the hope of any effective international co-operation, and they do not believe that religion is any exception to the rules that govern politics. Some have little faith in organized religion in any form and would make religion purely an individual concern like art or friendship. Others still feel the need for the church but would limit its sphere of operation to the nation.

In their view the church should supply the motive for the sacrifices which the state requires of its citizens, but it should be careful not to criticize state policies. There is a party in Germany which frankly avows this aim. It would identify religion and race and make the church the department of the state for religion.<sup>2</sup> And while few in other countries would go so far, there are many who in their heart of hearts would limit the sphere of the church's responsibility to the nation. So far as they make place for internationalism at all in their view of the church, it is of the same kind as that which alone they are willing to admit in the case of the nation, the co-operation which is possible to independent sovereigns who from time to time find it to their interest to enter into treaty relations with other equally independent powers.

Others carry their break with the older ideals even further. They repudiate not simply the internationalism of Christianity, but Christianity itself. In religion in all its forms, the highest as the lowest, they see the chief obstacle to the advance of humanity. Religion, they tell us, is the means which capitalists use to delude the people with promise of a better world after death, while they exploit them in this world. It is therefore an enemy to be fought to the limit. In Russia atheism has assumed the form of a religion and young people are invited to join the League of the Godless in order that they may promote the Kingdom of Man. Here we have interna-

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rosenberg, A., *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (München, 1934).



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tionalism indeed, but an internationalism which is definitely anti-Christian. Against such militant irreligion how can a divided church prevail?

There is much that can be said for the view, held by some with regret, by others with exultation, that the church has had its day. Looked at superficially, we seem to be on the eve of a new *Götterdämmerung*—the twilight of the gods. Yet it is possible that this darkness that dims the horizon may prove but the half light which preludes the dawn. Often in the past men have celebrated the passing of religion only to see the church come back purified by tribulation to enter upon a new period of witness and of ministry. Why may it not be so today?

If it is to be so, it will be because those who are responsible for the leadership of the church read the signs of the times and take the steps which are necessary to recover for the church the position of influence and of authority which it is God's will that she should hold. The weakness which we deplore has not come upon the church without a cause. It is because we have been unfaithful to the trust committed to us that when our hour of opportunity comes it finds us unready. Never was there a time, so those who know our colleges tell us, when religion held so large a place in the thoughts of young people. Never was there a time, so our publishers assure us, when there was a more active interest in religious books. If then people do not turn to the church, which is the distinctive organization of religion, for the help and guidance they need, it must be because the church no

longer means to them what the church ought to mean—the place where one goes to find living religion. Let them see in the church again what Paul saw, the body of Christ, the temple of his Spirit, the family of the redeemed, the communion of saints, and it will no longer be necessary to urge people to come. You will not be able to keep them away, for in the church they will find that which in their heart of hearts they know they most need—courage, peace, assurance,

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT BOOK

I believe that such splendid service may still be in store for the church, and it is my purpose in this book to point out what must happen if this happy consummation is to be reached. What must happen can be expressed in a single sentence. We must transcend our differences through a unifying purpose. We must cease to think of the church as we have been thinking of it, as the organization through which we can realize the type of religion most congenial to each of us. We must see it as what, in God's sight, it was meant to be—his agent for the redemption of the peoples. We must no longer be content to remain Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, even Catholics or Protestants. We must become Christians in the comprehensive, but also testing, sense of that word. We must recover again the missionary spirit as becomes those to whom has been entrusted good news for all mankind. We must sub-

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mit to the discipline that is necessary to fit us for such service—the discipline of mind that will make us ready to rethink questions we believed to have been settled, the harder discipline of will that will make us willing to undertake tasks which have hitherto been shunned. And we must join hands with every one of whatever name or race who for Christ's sake and mankind's is ready to do the same.

This book is designed as a contribution to such a revived church. The work that lies before us is neither easy nor simple. It will make heavy demands both upon mind and upon will. We must learn to distinguish great things from small. We must turn our eyes from the things that separate us to the more important things that we have in common. And when we have seen, we must act. It is futile to argue about the things on which we differ while we refuse to act together in the things on which we agree.

The particular differences which will concern us in this book are those which separate Catholics and Protestants. As we have said, they are not the only differences between Christians which inhibit action; but of all existing differences they are the most basic and far-reaching, for they concern not simply the beliefs which separate Christians but also, and above all, the method that ought to be followed in dealing with them. They bring to us therefore in the most direct way the theme to which this book is devoted—the right way to deal with differences of conviction.

A word as to the sense in which the terms "Cath-

olic" and "Protestant" are used. Like most words which have had a long history, they have acquired many associations, some of them misleading, others clarifying. It is important, therefore, that we should be clear at the outset as to the sense in which we shall use them here.

There are three senses (among others) which we may give to the word "Catholic." In its broadest and most comprehensive sense "Catholic" means simply universal. It expresses the Christian faith that the church of Christ is in its ideal a world-wide spiritual fellowship which includes all true believers in Christ of whatever name. This is the sense in which it is used in the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." In this comprehensive sense all Christians, Protestants as well as Catholics technically so-called, are Catholic.

In the narrowest sense, the term denotes a particular ecclesiastical organization, the special branch of the Church Catholic which owns the supremacy of Rome. This is the sense in which Roman Catholics use the term, and in this they are followed by many Protestants.

There is another sense in which the word may be used, namely, to describe the kind of faith and life which is common to the various branches of the church whose type of piety follows models set by the pre-Reformation Church in contrast to those that find their standards in the post-Reformation period. In this sense the Eastern Orthodox Churches are Catholic, and that party in the Anglican and Prot-

## 14 WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON THE CHURCH?

estant Episcopal Churches that calls itself Anglo-Catholic.

In like manner there are three senses in which we may use the term "Protestant." In the narrowest sense we may use it to denote the kind of Christian who in contrast to the inclusive ideal expressed by the first of our meanings of Catholicism values his private judgment so highly that for its sake he is willing if necessary to break with the church as a whole. In this sense Protestantism and individualism are synonyms.

Again, we may use the word "Protestant" in the ecclesiastical sense to describe those churches which in protest against what they believed to be the abuses of the existing church broke with Rome and established independent national, and later denominational, churches. This meaning emphasizes the negative and critical side of historic Protestantism and is therefore unsympathetic to those Christians, whether Catholics or Protestants, who wish to emphasize the continuity of the church's life.

There is still another sense in which we may use the word "Protestant." We may use it to designate the type of piety which meets us in the churches which find their standards in the post-Reformation period, not in the sense of rejecting what was good and true in the older church but in the sense of re-emphasizing the positive elements in the Christian Gospel which in the preceding period had been obscured. Protestant in this sense is a synonym for evangelical, a term which our Continental fellow-

Christians commonly use to designate the various churches which belonged to the Reformed tradition.

It is in the latter of these three senses that we shall use the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" in this book. We shall use them not primarily to denominate parallel ecclesiastical organizations (though this use of the term cannot be altogether avoided), but to designate contrasted types of the Christian experience. We shall be studying the differences that separate Christians in the type of their religious life, but at the same time, and still more, the common convictions, experiences, and loyalties which unite them.

The writer is a Protestant by conviction. He believes that Protestantism holds something precious in trust for humanity; but he believes also that God has spoken to men and still speaks to them by means of the Catholic Church. Among the prophets through whom God has made known his will to mankind and the saints in whom his grace has blossomed into holy living are many to whom light and life have come through the mediation of that church. This precious heritage he would appropriate for himself and so far as in him lies would help his fellow-Protestants to appropriate it. Only when this has been done and Protestants who pride themselves upon their openness of mind practise what they preach, can the truth for which Protestantism is witness find unprejudiced hearing in Catholic circles.

For the issue is not really between Protestantism and Catholicism, but between Christianity and irreligion. The church of Christ is now, and always

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must be, both Catholic and Protestant—Catholic in its comprehensive provision for every human need, Protestant in its unceasing opposition to every form of error. Only in such a church, inclusive of all that is good, purged of everything that is evil, can heart-sick and needy men and women find their abiding home.

*PART I*  
*THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES*

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCHES THAT ARE MANY AND THE CHURCH  
THAT IS ONE

1. The Church, Seen from Without and from Within.
2. The Churches That Are Catholic and Those That Are Protestant.
3. Schools and Parties Within the Churches.
4. The Unity Which All Christians Recognize.
5. Ways of Expressing the Unity That Matters.



*All Christians agree that as a spiritual society the church of Christ is one; yet the fact remains that in its organized capacity the church is divided into many independent and self-governing churches. While by far the greater number of these are Protestant, there are more than thirty that according to the classification here adopted must be called Catholic. In addition to these formal ecclesiastical divisions there are relatively independent units within the larger churches, like the orders in the Roman Catholic Church, while more informal differences take the form of parties and schools. The existence of these differences, external and internal, in the church which claims to be one constitutes a problem which the different branches of the church attempt to solve in different ways.*

*The solution which the Roman Church adopts is a legal solution. It requires for the realization of the unity of the church the recognition by all Christians of the supremacy of the Pope. The solution of the Orthodox is a mystical solution. It consists in the fact that the members of each of the churches in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarch recognize the others as holding to the tradition of the one undivided church. The solution of the Protestant is a practical solution. It consists partly in the fact that the different Protestant denominations are federated for the purpose of common service, partly in the fact that their individual members co-operate in autonomous societies that cut across denominational lines.*

## 1. THE CHURCH, SEEN FROM WITHOUT AND FROM WITHIN

We are to study the differences between Catholics and Protestants; and these differences, as we have seen, centre in their view of the church. It is important for us therefore, before we begin, to understand just what we mean by this term.

This is not so easy as it might appear, for the word "church" has many meanings, and they correspond to different aspects of the many-sided reality for which it stands. From the point of view of the ordinary church member, the church means the building in which he worships or the congregation to which he belongs. To the ecclesiastic, the church is a religious institution, with its constitution and laws, serving certain necessary religious ends and performing certain indispensable religious functions. To the statesman it is a civil corporation, organized under the laws of the country in which it exists and, like every other corporation, receiving certain privileges from the state and owing certain duties to it. To the social worker the church is a philanthropic organization, performing certain useful functions in society. To the missionary it is God's appointed agent for the proclamation of his Gospel and the redemption of mankind. To the theologian it is witness in a

world of change to truth once for all revealed and hence the guardian of orthodoxy. To those who take their religion seriously it is an indispensable help in the cultivation of the personal religious life and deserves their allegiance most of all for this, that it has been, and still is, the mother of the saints.

The difficulty which we find in distinguishing between these different meanings is not confined to the student of religion. Wherever we attempt to understand any social institution we find the need of similar discrimination. Because of the complex nature of man as a being, at once spiritual and physical, he requires, in order to enter into relations with his neighbors, a mechanism no less complex. When this mechanism has lasted for a long time and affects many people, it becomes an institution. An institution is a device that gives legal form to the common customs of many different individuals and enables them to act as one. In its developed form it has a constitution to express its purposes. It has laws to define the ways in which it shall be carried on. It has officials to see that the laws are obeyed. And this mechanism, like everything that receives definite physical embodiment, tends to detach itself from the end it is designed to serve. It becomes an end in itself. So there comes to pass that strange phenomenon we call orthodoxy, a phenomenon not confined to religion, though it has its most familiar manifestation there. Orthodoxy on the face of it is something which all well-disposed people should approve. It means simply right thinking. But it tends to acquire a secondary meaning

which is not so admirable. It stands for an attitude which judges men by the fidelity with which they support existing institutions and makes the test of fellowship willingness to accept without question the beliefs and practices which the decision of the constituted authorities has approved.

Some years ago the British Medical Board of Registration struck from the roll of qualified practitioners a physician of unexceptional character and standing for a breach of medical etiquette. He had co-operated with an unlicensed practitioner. There were to be sure extenuating circumstances. The practitioner in question was doing what he did at the request of the army authorities. It had been found that there was a special kind of case induced by shell shock for which his treatment seemed to give relief not found possible in any other way. But for this treatment it was necessary to give an anæsthetic, and this no unlicensed practitioner was allowed to do. Unless, therefore, some qualified physician was willing to lend his assistance the needed help could not be given. It seemed to this particular doctor a case where human need should take precedence over medical orthodoxy. So he broke the rule and administered the anæsthetic. His colleagues of the faculty did not share his views of the propriety of his act. For his transgression of the rules of the guild his license was removed, and he was debarred from practising his profession. Only after his death was tardy reparation made and by posthumous action his name was restored to the roll.

That is an example of medical orthodoxy. Yet no

one would think of condemning doctors as a class because at certain points their rules appear to the layman unduly rigid. To learn to know the medical profession you would not attend the lectures of the medical faculty or study the prescriptions which determine the qualifications for medical licensure. You would watch the doctors at their work as they go from sick bed to sick bed in the hospitals or through the long night, when the hours seem like years, watch by some sleepless sufferer in the hope that they may be able to do something to prolong life or to relieve pain.

A similar contrast meets us in every profession. The law has its orthodoxy, and so has business, and politics; and in every calling we find a tension between the claims of the institution, with its rigid rules, and the ever-changing need of man. In identifying churchmanship with orthodoxy the church is only doing what all other human institutions have done.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No church has carried this identification farther than has the Church of Rome, for no church has made legal conformity to the same extent a test of sound churchmanship. Yet Rome has no monopoly of this identification. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century there was held at Dortrecht, in Holland, a synod which in the number and authority of those who attended it was the most representative gathering of Protestant churchmen since the Reformation. It had been called to consider the issues raised by a new school which had arisen within Protestantism and which took its name from its leading theologian, James Arminius. This school affirmed, in opposition to the prevailing belief among Reformed theologians, that man had retained since the Fall sufficient freedom to make it possible for him either to receive or to reject the divine offer of salvation; that Christ on the Cross had made an atonement sufficient for all mankind; and that salvation therefore was conditioned upon man's willingness to accept the forgiveness thus made possible. The majority of the synod rejected the doc-

The church then is not peculiar in the contrast it presents between its institutional and its personal aspects. But in religion the tension between these two aspects is more acute because of the seriousness of the issues with which it is concerned. The church, to the faith of its members, is more than a human institution. It is a divine creation, custodian and interpreter to mankind of a revelation from God of world-wide significance. In the church therefore the

trine of the Remonstrants, as they were called, reaffirmed the doctrine of predestination in its extreme form, and made acceptance of the five points of Calvinism the condition of ministerial standing in the church.

That, we are told, happened 300 years ago. But it is only an extreme illustration of a spirit which is still much in evidence. There is a rubric in the Prayer Book of the Church of England which prescribes that on Trinity Sunday the Athanasian Creed shall be substituted for the more familiar Nicene Creed. The Athanasian Creed is a statement composed in the fifth century by an unknown Latin author which expounds the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ. It describes the relation between the three persons of the Trinity, pointing out in highly technical language the points on which they agree and the points on which they differ; and it warns against the danger of making any mistake on this abstruse and difficult matter. It then proceeds in like manner to define the relation between the human and divine natures in our Lord, showing how improper it is to attribute to one of these natures what belongs to the other; and it concludes with the solemn warning to all Christians to hold this creed in the exact form in which it is thus defined for them, since he who fails so to hold it will without doubt perish everlastingly.

As a teacher of theology I should be the last to belittle the importance of right thinking about religion or to minimize the function of the church as witness and interpreter of God's revelation to man. I believe that at the heart of all the controversies which have been waged by the theologians of the different churches there are real issues which, could they be translated into simple language, would be seen to have a bearing, nearer or more remote, upon man's welfare and destiny. But this belief is quite consistent with the recognition that many of the issues on which the theologians have joined swords are of theoretical interest mainly and that even where this is not the case the language used is often so technical that it conveys little meaning to the ordinary church member. It needs retranslation if its message is to carry home.

relation between the mechanism through which the institution functions and the spiritual purposes it is designed to serve presents issues not present to the same extent in any other institution.

For consider what the church means to those who look at it not from without but from within. The church, so Christians believe, is the society which God has created in our sinful world to be the channel of his revelation and redemption. Through the church God speaks to men of the things which concern their eternal salvation. Its message has to do with that part of man's experience which transcends time and makes him citizen of a heavenly kingdom. As to just how that message comes and how it is to be interpreted, Christians may differ. But that the church is the channel through which God's message is to be transmitted and that its success or failure is to be judged by its fidelity to that trust, all are agreed.

Nor is the church's responsibility one of witness merely. It is the agent through which in this world God's purpose for man is to be realized. Here again there are differences of interpretation, some confining the work of the church to the preparation of individuals for the coming kingdom, others seeing in the church God's agent for the promotion of radical social change. But all agree that the church's message has social as well as individual reference and that this lays upon the church the duty to pass judgment upon the present social order so far as it is unchristian.

Above all, the church is significant to those who are its members because of the transformation of life which it makes possible. That God is not limited in his dealings with men to the ecclesiastical institution, all Christians agree. But that organized Christianity is his normal agent for the promotion of the Christian life, they are equally persuaded. Through the church, with its helpful ministry of word and sacrament, the distant God is brought near and the humble and contrite spirit, assured of the divine forgiveness, is introduced into the communion of saints.

We have here a paradox of the first order—an institution manifestly human claiming to speak with divine authority; a company of men and women, confessedly sinful, knowing themselves to be witnesses of the holy God.

This dual relationship makes the unity of the church of crucial importance. Were the church merely a human institution, its divisions might well give cause for concern, but they could be borne with equanimity as necessary incidents in the process of experimentation through which humanity works out its destiny in spite of the frailty of its individual members. But where the society to which our allegiance is invoked claims divine authority, its divisions have more far-reaching consequences; for they not only limit the efficacy of its ministry but in many cases lead men to question the authenticity of its witness.



## 2. THE CHURCHES THAT ARE CATHOLIC AND THOSE THAT ARE PROTESTANT

If one were to open the last volume of the United States Census of Religious Bodies and turn to the table that catalogues the different Protestant denominations, he would find more than two hundred on the list.<sup>2</sup> These denominations differ greatly in numbers and in influence. Some have millions of communicant members; others only some hundreds or thousands. Some have an income running up into the millions and tens of millions; others have exceedingly modest resources. But they are all alike in this, that they are independent and self-governing bodies. Each claims within its own sphere all the powers of the church as a whole. Each is conscious of fulfilling all its functions. When a man joins the Presbyterian Church, or the Methodist, or the Baptist, he does not think of himself as joining a sect. He becomes a member of the church universal, and this wider relationship is recognized in the form of service that admits him.

The multiplicity of the Protestant denominations is a standing subject of reproach by Catholics. They contrast the many sects with the one church. What differentiates the Catholic from the Protestant is just this, they tell us, that whereas the Protestant recognizes many churches, the Catholic acknowledges

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1926*, Vol. I, Summary and Detailed Tables (Washington, D. C., 1930), pp. 10-12.

but one. Yet from the statistician's point of view this statement cannot be accepted without challenge. For Catholicism too has no single all-embracing organization to which all Catholics own allegiance. The Roman Church, the largest and the most exclusive of all the Catholic bodies, includes only a part of those who call themselves Catholics. Eastern Catholicism, or to use its own title, the Orthodox Church, has some 150,000,000 members, and these are organized in no less than twenty self-governing churches, each sovereign in its own right.<sup>3</sup> Besides

<sup>3</sup> A convenient summary of the condition of the Orthodox churches in 1929 is given by Zankov (Stefan) in his book, *The Eastern Orthodox Church*, trans. and ed. by Donald A. Lowrie (London, 1929), pp. 22-23:

"The present-day autocephalic or autonomous orthodox churches are as follows: (1) The patriarchate of Constantinople, with about 300,000 souls, almost all Greeks; (2) the patriarchate of Alexandria, with about 50,000 souls, two-thirds of them Greeks; (3) the patriarchate of Antioch, with about 250,000 souls, of whom about nine-tenths are Arabs; (4) the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with 33,000 souls, practically all Arabs, although the leadership of the church is in the hands of Greek monks of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem; (5) the Archbishopric of Cyprus, with about 180,000 souls, all Greeks; (6) the Russian patriarchate, with 120,000,000 souls, practically exclusively Russian; (7) the patriarchate of Serbia, with about 60,000 souls, almost all Serbs; (8) the patriarchate of Rumania, with approximately 13,000,000 souls, including about 800,000 Russians and 400,000 Bulgarians; (9) the Church of Greece, with about 5,000,000 souls, almost all Greek; (10) the Church of Bulgaria with about 5,000,000, all Bulgarians; (11) the Church of Poland, with about 5,000,000, all Russians; (12) the Church of Georgia in Russia, with about 275,000 souls; (13) the autonomous Church of Albania, with about 120,000 souls, almost exclusively Albanians; (14) the autonomous Church of Finland, half Russians and half Finns, with about 60,000 souls; (15) the autonomous Church of Esthonia, with about 220,000 souls, 155,000 Russians, and 65,000 Esthonians; (16) the autonomous Church of Latvia, with about 240,000 souls, of these 170,000 Russians and 70,000 Letts; (17) the autonomous Church of Lithuania, with about 75,000 souls, all Russians; (18) the autonomous Church of Czechoslovakia, with about 250,000 souls, of these 200,000 Ruthen-

this, we find a number of independent bodies calling themselves Catholic, yet regarded by their fellow-Catholics as heretical;<sup>4</sup> and in the West we meet the old Catholic Church with its 400,000 members perpetuating in the form of an independent Catholic communion the spirit of a simpler and a more inclusive Catholicism.<sup>5</sup>

The existence of these many independent and self-governing communions affects the life of the church in many ways. It perpetuates differences which apart from the laws in which they are embodied might cease to have significance. To join a church is not simply to become a member of a fellowship. It is to become partner in an institution. Every church, even the most independent, has its constitution and laws, its discipline and tradition; and it is easy, almost inevitable that those who administer these laws and interpret this tradition should give them a sanctity of their own quite apart from the ends which they were meant to serve.

ians and 50,000 Czechs; (19) the autonomous Russian Orthodox Archbishopric of North America, with 250,000 members, Russians; (20) the autonomous Archbishopric of Japan under Russian leadership, with about 35,000 souls, all Japanese." This statement includes in the membership of the different national churches all those who are formal members of the state religion and takes no account of the defections which have resulted from the secularist attack upon religion, notably in Russia.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, the Armenians, the Syrians, the Nestorians, the Copts, etc. Cf. Adeney, Walter F., *The Greek and Eastern Churches* (New York, 1908); Fortescue, Adrian, *The Lesser Eastern Churches* (London, 1913).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Williams, N. P., and Harris, C., editors, *Northern Catholicism*, "An Outline of the History of the Old Catholic Church," Supplementary Essay by Van Kleef, B.A. (New York, 1933), pp. 531 *seq.*

The fact that the church is an institution has significance beyond the limits of its own membership. Each branch of the church is not only sovereign in its own right, but must deal with other bodies equally sovereign. Among these bodies are not only other churches, but the state, in which the church exists and to whose laws so far as it is a civil corporation it must conform. This relation gives rise to a host of problems which in the course of history have found their solution in different ways. There have been times, as in the days of the great popes, when the church in its law-giving capacity claimed supremacy over the state. There have been countries, as in the England of Henry VIII and, if the extremists have their way, in the Germany of today, where the state has claimed supremacy over the church. There have been many attempts, as in the France of Napoleon I and in Italy under the present Concordat, to apportion the territory between the two; but the resulting equilibrium has proved unstable. The more seriously men take their patriotism, the more earnestly they value their religion, the more inevitable it will be that the claims of the church and the state will clash.

This fact gives our subject more than academic significance. In this age of aggressive nationalism it becomes increasingly difficult for the international spirit to find adequate organs of expression. Now more than ever we need a church which can transcend the boundaries of race, of class, and of nation, and

speak to men of every race of those eternal interests which belong to man as man.

### 3. SCHOOLS AND PARTIES WITHIN THE CHURCHES

If all Christians were agreed as to what the church is and what it should do, it would not be difficult to find the way to bring this unity to expression. But this, unfortunately, is not the case. Apart from the external differences we have described, there are differences of conviction which separate Christians from one another; and these, as we have seen, cut across formal ecclesiastical divisions and appear within each of the churches in the form of rival parties or schools.

Some of these differences have to do with the church's belief. The church is a teaching body. It brings a gospel for mankind, and this gospel is expressed in its creed. But creeds must be interpreted, and this is the work of theology. In the course of this interpretation differences emerge, both as to what the church has taught and as to what it means by its teaching. The creeds were written, many of them, long ago, and use terms which, natural at the time, have for many of our day lost their meaning. They witness to realities which, while transcending history, have been communicated to men through experiences which took place in space and time. The record of these experiences has been transmitted to us by testimony which, like all testimony, is affected by the competence and trustworthiness of the wit-

ness. All the complex problems which meet us in the interpretation of any ancient document recur when we attempt to interpret the creeds. There are questions of fact, on which historians may differ, and questions of interpretation on which philosophers may disagree. So we see rival schools arising—nominalists and realists in the Middle Ages, Calvinists and Arminians in the seventeenth century, fundamentalists and modernists at the present day.

Other differences have to do with the nature of Christian worship. There are Christians who are by temperament mystics. They feel at home in the contemplative life. To them to be religious means to enter a world where the happenings of this transitory life have lost their interest. Through the practice of prayer they have been introduced to realities that outlast change, and in the communion of saints they have found a fellowship with which no earthly friendship can compare.

There are others whose Christianity is of a more active sort. They believe that they serve God best when they minister to the needs of men. So they give themselves to good works; they become philanthropists or, as reformers, organize to wage ceaseless war against the ills from which their fellow-mortals suffer.

In their definition of the practical task to which Christ summons also we find Christians differing. Some, as we have said, think exclusively of the individual, while others have a wider social program. To the latter it is the church's responsibility not

merely to call individuals to repentance but to establish God's kingdom among men. These take the petition of the Lord's Prayer seriously: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." To them the doing of God's will is not exhausted by binding up the wounds of those who have been worsted in life's battle. It means removing the causes which lead men to fight. Like Micah and Amos centuries ago, like more recent disciples such as Charles Kingsley or Walter Rauschenbusch, they are prophets of social righteousness. They take the divine message seriously: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"<sup>6</sup>

These contrasted attitudes toward the religious life are, I repeat, not matters of purely individual concern. They cut across ecclesiastical boundaries and unite men of very different denominational names. Fundamentalism is not the monopoly of any single church, nor is modernism confined to any one denomination. There are fundamentalists and modernists in all the churches, and they find their natural affinities in men of the same type, of whatever ecclesiastical name.

Often the bond is more than one of sympathy. When the cause seems important enough, those of similar mind will organize into a party. The group in the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Churches which calls itself Anglo-Catholic is such a

<sup>6</sup> Micah 6:8.

party.<sup>7</sup> Its members are not content to remain Catholics in a church which makes room for Protestants. They wish the church to become Catholic in all phases of its life, and to bring this about they have created an effective agency of propaganda. Between them and their Protestant fellow-churchmen there is a gap often wider than between the latter and the Protestants in other churches. In the Presbyterian Church in the United States the fundamentalists have organized for the purpose of making their views prevail and for this purpose have founded a seminary and are proposing to organize a board of foreign missions committed to the fundamentalist creed.

The Roman Catholic Church has found an effective way to make room for such differences of viewpoint within the larger whole. Through the various monastic orders it has made possible the development side by side of types of piety and of ecclesiastical activity which differ widely from one another. To understand Roman Catholicism one must do more than read the encyclicals of the Pope or study the organization of the Curia; more than watch the bishops as they rule their dioceses or the priests as they celebrate mass and hear confessions. One must enter such a Benedictine monastery as that of Maria Laach, where monks who are artists and sculptors are creating forms of beauty. One must come to know the genius of the Franciscans with their simple, cheerful type of piety and of the Dominicans

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Kelly, Herbert H., *Catholicity*, Part I, "The Catholic Party" (London, 1932), pp. 17-36.



with their scholarly ideals. One must contrast the austerity of the Trappists with their rule of silence with the *savoir faire* of the members of the Society of Jesus who live their lives in the world. One must meet the nuns who in their sisterhoods serve in hospital or school, and learn something of the inner fire which burns in the breast of the Carmelite nuns who, in the solitude of their cells, give themselves to the life of prayer.

#### 4. THE UNITY WHICH ALL CHRISTIANS RECOGNIZE

Yet in spite of these differences, internal and external, all Christians believe that the church is already in the deepest and truest sense one. No Roman Catholic believes that all the members of the true church are found within the limits of the present Roman jurisdiction. All baptized persons, and that means all those who have been baptized with the Trinitarian formula by a person who has the intention to baptize, are to Roman Catholics members of the Roman Church. The Christianity of these persons may be very inadequate and their beliefs may need correction. From the point of Catholic orthodoxy they may be teaching heresy and living in schism. But they are Catholics none the less and members of the one true church. It makes no difference that the person who has baptized them is from the point of view of the theologian a layman or if what he teaches is heretical. If he has used the right formula and if it was his intention to perform baptism,

then his baptism is valid and need not be repeated.<sup>8</sup>

Nor is this all. Catholics recognize that there are persons who have never been baptized who belong to the one church. There are devout persons who, for no fault of their own, have never known the true church or to whom the claim of the Catholic Church has been presented inadequately. But if they have the right spirit—that is, if their attitude is such that if the true church were presented to them they would accept it willingly—God will not hold their ignorance against them. He will take the will for the deed and the opportunity not given here will be furnished in the life to come.<sup>9</sup>

For the Orthodox Church the problem of the church's unity is at once simpler and more difficult than it is for Rome. It is simpler because Orthodoxy has never felt the necessity for a single legal organization in order to safeguard the unity of the church. That unity, as the Eastern mind conceives it, is a mystical rather than a legal unity; yet it unites the members of the different self-governing churches with a bond that is none the less efficacious because it is spiritual only. The teaching of the church on the other hand presents difficulties for the Orthodox

<sup>8</sup> It is true that in practice the church feels that without more complete verification than is ordinarily possible it cannot assume that in a particular case Protestant baptism does in fact comply with the required conditions. But the formula used in the conditional baptism which is ordinarily practised—"If thou hast not been baptized, I baptize thee"—recognizes the validity of lay baptism in principle.

On this subject cf. the illuminating chapter in Adam, Karl, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, entitled "The Church Necessary for Salvation" (Eng. tr. New York, 1929), pp. 159-175.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

theologian which are not felt to the same degree by Western thinkers, whether Roman or Protestant. For Orthodoxy, unlike the other branches of the church, makes no theoretical difference between the visible and the invisible church. To the Orthodox therefore, the presence of genuine piety in those outside the Catholic family presents intellectual problems for which as yet no adequate solution has been found. That their Protestant fellow-Christians are Christians, they gladly recognize. That it is their duty and their privilege to pray with them and to work with them, they admit. But in what sense and to what extent they have a right to call them members of the church they are not yet clear.

Different from both of these attitudes is the form taken by the consciousness of the church's unity in Protestantism. Protestants feel that outward organization, while important, is secondary. There is therefore for most Protestants no theoretical difficulty in conceiving that the one church may be organized in a number of parallel independent and self-governing churches, however great may be the practical difficulties to which such a divided organization gives rise. Indeed, one of the reasons why it has thus far been difficult to interest Protestants in the matter of church unity in the sense in which unity is vital to the Catholic consciousness, both Roman and Orthodox, is that to the Protestant that unity is already here. When the Presbyterian becomes a Methodist or the Congregationalist a Presbyterian, he is not conscious of joining another church. He is simply

passing from one to another of the many bodies into which the one church of Christ is for the moment divided.

## 5. WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE UNITY THAT MATTERS

These differences in the conception of the unity of the church affect the ways in which that unity finds practical expression. For each of the different types of historic Christianity it becomes a problem how to express the unity which is recognized and each solves the problem in its own way.

The Roman solution is a legal solution. Rome believes that the unity of the Christian church requires a single world-wide organization for its effective expression. Within that organization place may be made for smaller units with relative independence, either based on geographical distribution, as in the diocesan system, or upon differences of purpose or of type, as in the religious orders, or the Uniate groups.<sup>10</sup> But these units, legitimate as they may be and wide as may be the range of their permitted variation, are units within a larger whole. All alike own allegiance to a single head and find the limits of their independent authority in decisions which may be made by the curia on points of practice as well as of doctrine. The method through which the Church of Rome defines the

<sup>10</sup> A name given to bodies of Eastern Christians recognizing the authority of Rome to whom Rome grants special privileges, such as the right to use their own liturgy and to have a married clergy. Cf. Williams, Michael, *The Catholic Church in Action* (New York, 1934), pp. 255-267.

unity which matters is a legal method, and the agencies through which that unity finds expression are legal agencies.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to say that the unity to which the church gives expression is legal merely. Roman Catholics are well aware of the limits of external organization. They distinguish as clearly as Protestants between the church visible and the church invisible. They recognize, as we shall see more clearly later on, that many members of the visible church are imperfect and sinful and that these, as a result of their misuse of the opportunities with which the church furnishes them, may fail finally to achieve salvation. They recognize further that God's gifts are not confined to the visible church, but that there are many pious souls who, even apart from that church, may by God's grace find salvation. Nevertheless, they believe that God's normal way is the way the church provides and that, without the external organization, the spiritual graces which the church mediates would fail to reach those for whom they were meant. World-wide domination is therefore, and must in the nature of the case ever remain, the ideal of the church of Rome. It is the Roman way of realizing the unity that matters.

Very different is the conception of unity in the Eastern churches. These churches, like the Roman Church, are Catholic; and their piety, as we shall see presently, has much in common with the piety of

<sup>11</sup> This explains the view taken of baptism in the Roman Church. It is the way in which the needed contact is made with the organization and the existing unity given legal expression.

the Roman Church. In the form of their organization too there is much that is similar. Like Rome, they possess and make much of the diocesan episcopate. Like Rome, they have monastic orders both for men and for women. Like Rome, they claim to be a universal church and to express a type of Christianity everywhere and always valid. This is the meaning of the term by which they like best to describe themselves—the Orthodox churches.

Yet the nature of the unity which unites them is very different from that of the Roman Church. It is a mystical rather than a legal union. Orthodoxy has no Pope. There is indeed an ecumenical patriarch to whom honor is paid, but it is the honor due to a great history and a willingly accorded pre-eminence. It has no legal basis. The patriarch is but *primus inter pares*; and his function, besides that of giving friendly advice, is simply that of calling a general synod when the appropriate occasion arises. This synod, in which the representatives of different national churches meet on equal terms, is the final authority for the Orthodox. It alone has the power to define doctrine.

For more than a thousand years no such synod has met. The final authority for the Orthodox Church is in fact, therefore, the decisions of the seven acknowledged councils of the undivided church—that is to say those which are considered ecumenical by the existing churches.

Yet strange as it may appear to persons of legal mind, there is no church where over a wide area and in matters affecting many persons agreement is so wide

and divergence so narrow. If one comes to know the Orthodox at first hand, reads their literature, and takes part in their services, he will discover that they too, in their fashion, have found the way—a very different way from that of Rome—to realize the unity that matters.

There is still a third way of expressing essential unity—that which meets us in the Protestant churches. Like Rome, Protestantism believes in a unity which can express itself in deed. Like the Orthodox, the organization through which it functions is federative.<sup>12</sup> But whereas the federation which Orthodoxy recognizes is one of principle only, requiring for its expression the calling of a general synod, which for nearly a millennium has never met, that of Protestantism is a working body, or rather a group of working bodies, local, national, and international, through which the needs of the hour can be dealt with as they arise and the unity which is recognized in principle can find expression in practice.

We have in Protestantism, therefore, that which Orthodoxy lacks, an organization or group of organizations through which the existing unity of the Protestant churches can find expression in action. Some of these organizations are official in nature, like the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America or the Federation of Churches in Switzerland or in France. Others are undenominational in character, like the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A. or the

<sup>12</sup> It is true that the word "federation" is not ordinarily used by Orthodox Christians, but the principle which underlies it is consistent with the genius of Orthodox Christianity.

World's Student Christian Federation. But they have this in common: they are an effort to secure the executive efficiency which characterizes the Roman method without sacrificing the independence which is so highly valued by the Orthodox churches.

In principle, federation lends itself admirably to this end. It is a way which makes it possible for the co-operating units to retain sovereignty in a defined field of activity while they commit to a central authority the power to act for all in matters of common concern. It is the method which finds expression in the United States Constitution, where many independent states, by the delegation of a part of their authority, combine to form a nation. In practice, however, it proves difficult to secure from any self-governing organization the surrender of any significant part of its authority. In minor matters such delegation of authority may be tolerated. But when a crisis arises, the prior allegiance makes itself felt. The same reasons which have hampered the League of Nations in its effort to recreate on a world-wide scale a commonwealth of nations have thwarted the efforts to give the federations and councils of the different Protestant churches any effective executive authority.

Under these conditions another method has been tried in Protestantism which promises easier and quicker results. This is the creation of undenominational or interdenominational societies in which members of the different denominations who desire to act together for ends deemed important may find



an agency able to accomplish their purpose. Such undenominational societies are the Y. M. and Y. W. C. A., the World's Student Christian Federation, the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches, and others of the same kind. They have done notable work for the cause of Christ and proved themselves in the truest sense the servants of the church. But the fact that they have no official connection with the regular ecclesiastical machinery, or any defined responsibility to the churches, causes them often to be looked upon with suspicion by the more conservative churchmen and opens the door easily to secularizing tendencies which tend to divert them from their original purpose.

Thus wherever we look we find that unity is at once an ideal and a fact, an aspiration and an experience.

*PART I (CONTINUED)*

*THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES*

CHAPTER III

WHAT CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS HAVE IN  
COMMON

1. The Challenge of the Name "Christian."
2. The Common Faith.
3. The Common Loyalty.
4. The Common Experience.
5. The Common Fellowship.
6. The Common Limitation.

*Significant for our interpretation of the present relation between Catholics and Protestants is the fact that both alike call themselves Christians. This common claim points to the existence of common elements in the faith and experience of both. A summary of the points which Catholics and Protestants have in common reveals an impressive measure of agreement. This agreement appears in the field of belief, of loyalty, of experience, and of fellowship. Catholics and Protestants alike believe in the Christ-like God as Creator and Redeemer. Both profess their loyalty to Jesus Christ as Master and Lord. Both believe themselves to have had personal experience of his salvation. Both share the means of grace he has provided in the Bible, the sacraments, the ministry, and the saints. Great as are the differences between Catholics and Protestants in their interpretation of this common treasury of faith and life, their agreements are even greater.*

*One more bond of union between Catholics and Protestants deserves more consideration than it has often received, and that is their common limitation. Both confess that alike as individuals and as institutions they have fallen short of the divine ideal and need the divine forgiveness. Those who thus share the limitation of finiteness and are brothered in the experience of sin should be very patient with one another.*

## 1. THE CHALLENGE OF THE NAME "CHRISTIAN"

We have seen that Catholicism and Protestantism are ambiguous terms. Each stands for a group of independent and self-governing churches which differ from one another not only in the form of their organization, but in the type of their thought and the quality of their religious experience. Back of the formal differences which are registered in creeds and set standards for official action, there are subtle differences of the spirit—attitudes and tendencies, sympathies and repulsions, and these—in the last analysis the most vital of all the factors in the case—cut across all ecclesiastical divisions and make a new regrouping necessary.

The closer we come to these differences, the more formidable they become. What is there in common between the contemplative religion of the Russian mystic and the militant faith of an ultramontane Roman Catholic? What community of feeling can there be between the high Anglican, devoted to liturgy and sacrament, and the free and unconventional evangelical? What a shudder the very name Unitarian calls forth in some Christians who have been taught to regard the Trinity as the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae*!

So long as each group of Christians was content to remain within the limits set by its own tradition, it

was easy to ignore the issue raised by these differences. But the study of comparative religion has been forcing it upon our attention. It is the question how far and in what sense the Christian religion is one.

Tiele, in his *Introduction to the Study of Religion*,<sup>1</sup> denies that we have any right to speak of Christianity as one religion. In Christianity as in Buddhism, he tells us, we have to do, not with a single religion, but with a family of religions, which to be sure in their origin and in certain general principles are one; but for the rest are at most points widely separated and even hostile, one to the other, a group or family of religions, like the Aryan or Semitic. These groups, which we call the Christian and Buddhist religions, are differentiated from other groups in that they are still conscious of a common origin and relative spiritual relationship, simply because their origin has fallen in historic times, while that of the older groups belongs to the prehistoric period.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung in die Religionswissenschaft*, Eng. trans. (New York, 1897), p. 128. Cf. Brown, W. Adams, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1928), pp. 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> The extent and wide diversity of the variations within Christianity have been described by Doctor McGiffert in an impressive passage in the *Hibbert Journal* as follows:

"From the beginning, one of the extraordinary things about Christianity has been its great variety. To the Apostle Paul, to Ignatius of Antioch, and to thousands of believers since, a religion of redemption, releasing men from the trammels of the world and sin and death, and giving them the power of an endless life. To Justin Martyr, to Pelagius, to Socinus, a revelation of God's will which we have abundant ability to obey if we but choose, and obeying which we reap the fitting reward. To Clement of Alexandria, to Scotus Erigena, to Frederick William Hegel, to speculative thinkers of every age, a philosophy of the universe, explaining the whence and the whither, the beginning and the end of all things.

Yet the fact remains that in spite of these differences all the different kinds of Christians claim to be Christian. All wish to be, most profess that they are in fact, the kind of Christians that Jesus meant that they should be. One may be Catholic, one may be Protestant, one may be any one of the different kinds of Catholic or Protestant; one thing at least each claims to be—a Christian. In the common possession of the name Christian we have a challenge to further consideration of the things which all Christians have in common.

To the schoolmen, both Catholic and Protestant, the acceptance of a series of propositions, supposed to contain final and absolute truth touching God and man and the universe. To St. Bernard and Fénelon and William Law, to the mystics of all generations, the transcendence of human limitations in oneness with the divine. To St. Francis of Assisi and Thomas à Kempis, and many a lovely spirit of our own and other days, the imitation of Christ in his life of poverty, humility, and love. To Cyprian and Augustine and countless Catholics, the one holy, apostolic Church, an ark of salvation, alone providing escape from eternal punishment. To Hildebrand and Innocent, as to modern ultramontanists in general, the papal hierarchy, ruler of the nations of the earth. To Benedict of Nursia, to Boniface the Saxon Apostle, to not a few missionaries of these latter days, a great civilizing agency, raising whole peoples from ignorance and savagery to culture and humaneness. To the rationalist of the eighteenth century, the religion of nature, always one and unchanging, the worship of God and the pursuit of virtue. To a growing multitude of Christians of our own day, humanitarianism, the service of one's fellows in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"These," Doctor McGiffert goes on to say, "were not simply different phases of the same faith; these were often altogether different faiths. They were not the mere development of the original principle, the life and work and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth: they were many of them fresh creations. Their secret lay in the fact that Christianity has always been the vital faith of individuals, and not merely a public or national cult. Out of varied human experiences, determined by character, by temperament, by education, by example, the new ways of looking at things arose. Often forces entirely alien to Christianity had their part in producing them, and few of them would have been recognized by Jesus himself as an interpretation of his own faith or of his own ideals." (*Christianity in the Light of Its History* (July, 1913), pp. 717 seq.

To appreciate this common heritage at its full significance we must forget for the moment that we are Catholics or Protestants or any of the particular kinds of each, and think of ourselves simply as Christians, separated from all those whose outlook is purely secular by the fact of our faith in God, our loyalty to Jesus Christ, our experience of his redemption, and our fellowship in his church.

## 2. THE COMMON FAITH

Catholics and Protestants have in common a spiritual interpretation of the universe. Widely as they may differ in their interpretation of the method of God's working, they believe in a creative spirit whose existence gives meaning to the world and whose will sets the standard for right living. The first bond that unites Catholics and Protestants is faith in the living God.

Sometimes this faith in a Creative Spirit has taken a very naïve form. Some time ago a film was exhibited in the United States which had been prepared by the Soviet Government to interpret to the American people the spirit of the new economic order in Russia. Its theme was the transformation brought about in the life of the peasant by the introduction of modern scientific methods in agriculture. One of the pictures represented a group of peasants who in a time of drought had gathered under the leadership of their priests to pray for rain. In vain they bowed

their knees and raised their icons. The heavens remained closed. Then came science, with its tractors and its reforestation; and what appeal to God had failed to accomplish, reliance upon man had brought to pass.

Thoughtful Christians have long outgrown the naïve faith of these simple peasants. They believe that God fulfils his purpose through the orderly processes of nature as well as through his revelation in Bible and Church, and they thankfully make use of science as an instrument which God has given man for the mastery of the physical universe. But they believe none the less that the universe has a spiritual meaning; and when science has done its utmost, there remain aspects of reality which yield their secrets to the man of prayer.

Nor is it only the fact of God that Catholics and Protestants have in common. They agree in their conception of his nature. The God whom they worship at once inhabits the universe and transcends it. Mysterious though he be in his essence, he reveals himself to his creatures through qualities which, in however imperfect degree, they themselves share. He is a moral being, wise, righteous, loving, just in all his judgments, yet compassionate toward the sinful. He is not only judge but savior, not only creator but redeemer. Infinite though he be in his majesty and incomprehensible in his perfections, he has made himself known to man in recognizable ways in the person whom all Christians own as Savior and Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Catholics and Protestants are agreed in their conception of God's purpose for mankind. That purpose is a redemptive purpose. It involves the deliverance of man from the sin that besets him within and the evil that threatens him without, and his entrance upon a new life of righteousness and joy and peace. Whence these evils come, why this sin should be, remains a mystery of which the wisest confess their ignorance; yet that man himself is responsible for his own wrongdoing and God just in all his dealings is a conviction which all Christians share. Common also is the faith that God's purpose is world-wide in its range, that it outlasts death, and that it will issue at last in a righteous and happy society in which that which is here imperfect shall find completion and that which is here wrong shall be made right.

This faith in a loving God with a redemptive purpose finds clearest and most dramatic expression in the Christian attitude toward suffering. Catholics and Protestants alike see in suffering more than a proof of human weakness, or even than a penalty for human sin. Mysterious as it is in its origin and in its implications, suffering is not outside of the divine control, but is taken up into God's purpose as a necessary element in the process of the world's salvation. At the heart of the Christian religion stands the Cross. By the Cross all human suffering is transfigured through the revelation that the most tragic and baffling of human experiences can be made a conclusive demonstration of God's redemptive love.

### 3. THE COMMON LOYALTY

Faith in a just and loving God who reveals himself to man in redemptive acts is not confined to Christians. It is shared also by Jews and less clearly by the theists of all religions. But Christians differ from other religious people in their view of the way in which God's redemptive activity takes place. It is a method of self-impartment. God has not left man to himself, but has himself taken the initiative in man's salvation. Saints have prepared the way for the future Messiah; prophets have witnessed to his coming. In Christ, and in Christ alone, God's redemptive purpose has had its consummation. In his person God himself has entered humanity to share our experience and to partake of our sufferings. By the life of Christ, by his death and by his continuing influence, God shows himself in the truest sense man's savior and brings to the darkest spot on earth the hope of a new and brighter day. This hope, unquenchable by sorrow and stronger than death, Catholics and Protestants share.

To faith in God then we must add loyalty to Jesus Christ as a second bond of union between Catholics and Protestants.<sup>3</sup> This loyalty gives their fellowship in the church its distinctive character. It is a fellow-

<sup>3</sup> An impressive illustration of this common loyalty is found in a recent statement by a conference of Orthodox and Lutherans reported in the *Information Service* of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work under date of August, 1934:

"We recognize that we are sons of the same Father, but living in different houses on the earth. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and

ship in worship. In contemplation of the great gift which God has given them through Jesus Christ, they lift their hearts to him in adoration and join their voices in thanksgiving. It is a fellowship in service. Having received so great a gift, they recognize their obligation to share it with all to whom it has not yet come.

Fellowship in worship appears not only in the common use of the Lord's Prayer, but in the formula with which Christians commonly conclude their adoration "in the name of Christ." By this phrase they express their faith that the worship which is acceptable to God is worship in the spirit of Christ, through whom the needy spirit enters into the presence of the Heavenly Father.

As Christ sets the standard for worship, so also he sets it for service. In him we see a living example of the kind of love which God requires from all his children, not the love of kindred and friends only, but of man as man—a love given, not because it is deserved, but because it is needed.

Catholics and Protestants alike accept the obligation of Christian discipleship and consecrate themselves to its tasks. We see them undertaking missions at home and across the seas, teaching the ignorant, healing the sick, comforting the sorrowful, rescuing the outcast. The ministry of love, of which Christ gave the example, is the monopoly of no single group

the power of Christian love are stronger than those differences of doctrine and worship which separate us. Unfortunately we have been slow to realize this." (*International Christian Press and Information Service, Geneva, Information Series No. 26.*)

of Christians. It is a privilege and a responsibility which Catholics and Protestants share.

#### 4. THE COMMON EXPERIENCE

The bond that unites Catholics and Protestants is more intimate still. They share a common experience. Through Christ they have found peace with God and have received the pardon of their sins. Giving its tone to all Christian worship, public or private, the first prayer offered in the morning, the last petition uttered at night, is the prayer of the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner." <sup>4</sup> Sunday after Sunday rises the prayer of the Psalmist: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." <sup>5</sup>

With the experience of sin Christians share also the experience of victory over sin. Through Christ they have been convicted of sin; through Christ also they have found a way of escape from sin; so that they can say with the Apostle: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." <sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Luke 18:13.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 51:1-4.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 5:20.

This experience of forgiveness gives the Christian life its distinctive character. It is a life of adoration, of thanksgiving, of freedom, of fellowship. Wherever we meet it the Christian life is a life of adoration—the adoration of those who, conscious of having received gifts above their deserts, voice their gratitude to the giver.

The Christian life is a life of liberty. It is the life of those who, having received the forgiveness of their sins, have been set free by their new loyalty to give themselves without reserve to the service of others.

The Christian life is a life of fellowship, the fellowship of those who, through their common loyalty to Jesus Christ, are conscious of the ties that unite them to one another. It is a fellowship which transcends country, class, and race, and knows no limits narrower than the love of God himself.

Finally, the Christian life is a life of joy, the joy that those know who have dedicated themselves to a master who deserves their utmost allegiance and to a work in which every power can find satisfaction,—a joy that transfigures sorrow, that makes pain enduring, and that outlasts death.

Not all Christians share this experience to the same degree, nor is it at all times equally vivid. But when we study the lives of the greatest Christians, to whatever church they belong, we find that their experience has these notes: It is a life of adoration, of thanksgiving, of freedom, of fellowship, and of joy.

## 5. THE COMMON FELLOWSHIP

It is only against the background of this experience that we can appreciate the intimacy of the ties which unite Catholics and Protestants through their fellowship in the church. It is at this point, as we have seen, that the differences between Catholics and Protestants become most apparent. It is all the more important therefore that we should keep clearly in mind what as churchmen they have in common.

First of all, the Bible. There was a time not so long ago when Protestants thought of Catholics as withholding the Bible from the people, and there have been times in the history of the church when that charge was justified. But whatever may have been true of the church of the past, it is certainly not true today. Catholic piety is fed upon the Bible, and no one can understand it who does not realize this fact. Indeed there are aspects of the Biblical teaching, as we shall see, which Catholics accept more literally and emphasize more strongly than do Protestants. But whatever the differences in detail, the agreements are far greater than the divergences.

Common also to both are the creeds, in which the faith to which the Bible witnesses finds concrete expression—the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Some Christians, to be sure, regard the creeds as symbols of a reality incapable of exact definition, and are unwilling to make their acceptance a test of orthodoxy; others take them literally, and make their

formal acceptance the condition of fellowship. Some interpret God's presence in Jesus in mystical terms, seeing in incarnation a literal deification of human nature;<sup>7</sup> others conceive it as an ethical process which leaves the human individuality of Jesus intact. Some regard the church as the continuation of the incarnation in the sense that through its sacraments God makes it possible for man to conquer his mortality and to share in the divine life of the glorified Christ; others interpret the church's work in ethical terms, finding the chief proof of its divine mission in the fact that, through the means of grace it helps men and women, even here on earth, to imitate Jesus in his work of ministering love.

~~X~~ In this tangled maze of difference, we often overlook the basic agreements. In these creeds, Catholic and Protestant alike confess their faith in the living God, their Father, whose creative activity in nature and in human life gives the universe its significance and is the ground of our hope in its beneficent outcome; in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Master, in whose person God himself has entered humanity for our salvation and through whose birth, death, and triumphant victory over death we have assurance that we too shall conquer death and sin; in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of life, who spake by the prophets in days of old and is even now speaking to us today. They affirm their faith further in the one Holy Catholic Church, in the forgiveness of sins, in the

<sup>7</sup> On the sense in which this term is used in Catholic theology, cf. Chap. IV, pp. 84, 89, 90.

victory of the spirit over death, and in the life everlasting. In these common convictions, to pass over for the moment all other ties which unite them, Catholics and Protestants have a bond which, in spite of all differences of interpretation, makes them spiritually one.

We must come even closer home. For there are ties more intimate still, ties that are knit by the common use of the helps which the church has provided for our worship.

Open any hymn-book you please and try to distinguish, if you can, to what church belonged the authors of the hymns you love best. Live with any collection of prayers that brings together the adorations and the confessions, the thanksgiving and the intercession of the saints, and assign if you will to Catholic or to Protestant the utterances you can most entirely make your own. When you try to do this you will receive convincing evidence of the unity of the church of Jesus Christ, the church that is at once Catholic and Protestant.

This unity appears most impressively in the liturgy. The liturgy is the historic vehicle in which the dominant elements in Christian worship have crystallized into a form which has maintained its vitality and efficacy through the centuries. Here you will find prayers written three thousand years ago that are as new as the day they were first uttered and others composed but yesterday which witness to realities that are eternal.

Central in the liturgy, the oldest and the most



universal among the acts of Christian worship, are the sacraments: baptism, which is the sacrament of purification and forgiveness; the Lord's Supper, which is the sacrament of thanksgiving and renewal. These, with the Bible, in spite of all divergences at other points, Catholics and Protestants agree in recognizing as the chief means of grace.

† Yet the warning already uttered in connection with the creed is here again in place. Perhaps nowhere in the entire range of difference between Protestants and Catholics have the points of controversy been so acute as on the numbers, the function, and the efficacy of the sacraments. All the more important is it to remember that across all difference there is a common fund of experience that all Christians share. One does not need to partake of the physical media to share the spiritual benefits they mediate. That is Catholic doctrine as well as Protestant. In their common participation, even though by different forms and at separate places, in the one sacrament Christians have realized as in no other way their fellowship with the living Christ and their membership in the body which is his church.

Some years ago it was my privilege to be present at a Communion Service celebrated by that great worker for Christian unity, the late Bishop of Winchester. The occasion was the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. Next to me was seated a distinguished professor of the Orthodox Church. The rules of his church did not permit him to communicate physically

as was possible for the rest of us, but no one who knew him could doubt that in spirit he participated with us in the service and together we shared a sense of the real presence which the sacrament is designed to mediate.

It is in the experience which the sacraments mediate that our real bond of union is to be found. | At Lausanne an Anglo-Catholic was explaining to a little group why he could not join with his fellow-Christians in inter-communion, and the reason was that his experience of Christ's real presence in the sacrament was so vivid and sacred that he could not feel at home with those who did not share it. |

Among those present was a member of the Society of Friends. When the Anglo-Catholic had finished his description of his sacramental experience, this Friend followed with a description of his own. "What you say you experienced of Christ's real presence in the sacrament," he said, "could be transferred almost word for word to myself. This morning while you were still asleep I walked by the lake shore, and, as my thoughts went back in memory to that other lakeside where Christ walked nineteen hundred years ago, suddenly I became aware of his presence by my side. For me, as for Peter, Christ walked on the water, and I, like Peter, was conscious of his real presence."

This was not an isolated experience. Among the many spiritual insights which the meeting at Lausanne made possible, none were more enlightening than those connected with the sacraments. One evening a company of friends gathered at Sir Henry

Lunn's invitation to share their personal experiences of the Lord's Supper. They were of many different countries and branches of the church. Catholics were there, Orthodox and Anglican, and Protestants of different communions. But, as each in turn reported his own experience, an extent of agreement became apparent that was surprising to us all. Whether it was Anglican or Methodist, Presbyterian or Friend, Orthodox or Baptist, each had met Christ face to face in the sacrament, and had found food for his soul.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that when, in the year following the gathering at Lausanne, the great missionary Conference at Jerusalem culminated in a Good Friday communion service on the Mount of Olives, it was simply impossible to keep those present from a full participation. Whatever might be due to the rules of the several churches under ordinary conditions, it was felt that in this situation a higher law obtained. In the scene of his agony in the Garden, Christ was heard again offering his High-Priestly prayer for the unity of his church, and, in face of such an appeal, there was only one course for his disciples to follow.

When Johann Sebastian Bach, a devout Lutheran, wished for a vehicle for the supreme expression of his artistic achievement, he chose the words which are common to the sacramental worship of Catholics and Protestants—the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. The question has been much debated whether the famous B Minor Mass is Catholic or Protestant. The answer is that it is

neither exclusively. Begun as a musical rendering of those parts of the mass which have been retained in the Lutheran sacramental service, it was later expanded "into a complete Roman 'Missa,' " but the piety which finds expression in this celestial music is "neither Roman nor Lutheran in intention or outlook, but the expression of a genuinely Catholic Christianity."<sup>8</sup>

If the sacrament seems often to separate rather than to unite Catholics and Protestants, this is still more true of the ministry. Here at last, it would seem, we reach a point where the unity which we are eager to affirm has been broken. And indeed the contrast between the Catholic conception of the priesthood as a class separated from their fellow-Christians by a divine commission and endowment which the layman does not share, and the Protestant conception of the ministry as a company of men gifted by the Spirit with prophetic insight above their fellows is so great as often to seem insuperable. Yet even here there are agreements which in our loyalty to the truth we must not overlook. Protestants, like Catholics, recognize that among God's gifts to his church is a ministry fitted to dispense the means of grace. Protestants, like Catholics, recognize that some men have gifts that fit them for this ministry which are denied to others. Protestants, like Catholics, regard it as the responsibility of the church to discover these qualified servants and to set them apart with due solemnity to their appointed task. And when we ask who are the men

<sup>8</sup> Terry, Doctor Charles Sanford, quoted in *The New York Herald Tribune* (December 17, 1934).

whom they thus recognize, we find that our hard and fast line begins to waver and a new grouping appears. Protestants recognize among the ministers whose spiritual authority they admit and at whose hands they receive the means of grace many who hold office in the Catholic Church; and Catholics on their part, while still affirming the special prerogative of their own priesthood, do not deny that among Protestants, and indeed among many outside the limits of any visible church, God has called men to his service and honored their ministry with his blessing.

If the differences between Catholics and Protestants concerning the priesthood at certain points still seem insuperable, there is no such difficulty concerning that company of earnest spirits who in their love for God and their devotion to their fellowmen have been supreme. Sainthood is not the monopoly of any age or of any church, and in the help they receive from the men and women who for love's sake have shrunk from no sacrifice, Catholics and Protestants stand on common ground. The good life shines by its own light. Most precious of all the ties that unite Catholics and Protestants is the communion of saints.

## 6. THE COMMON LIMITATION

One more bond may be mentioned in closing which grows out of our common humanity. Catholics and Protestants alike share the limitations of finiteness—the intellectual limits which grow out of the fact of

the imperfection of our knowledge, the moral limitations which are the result of our common participation in sin.

Obvious as this fact may seem, it has implications which are often overlooked. It gives to the differences which separate us a provisional and transitory character. In our moments of intense conviction we are often blind to this transitory factor. What we see may be divine truth indeed, and what we experience may be divine reality; but our vision is blurred and our experience is partial. The report therefore that we bring back is never wholly to be trusted. Always our witness, even if it be to eternal truth, is the witness of fallible men. Always our experience, even if it be the experience of divine reality, is of limited and therefore of imperfect beings. And this limitation, a part of the very constitution of our human nature, is a bond that unites us to all who, like ourselves, are not gods, but men and women.

The fact of this limitation is well understood by those who are responsible for the official teaching of the church. The more one studies the theology of Catholics, as well as of Protestants, the further one penetrates into the genius of the life which inspires them, the more vivid becomes one's consciousness of this brotherhood in limitation.

Seen from without, the claims of Rome to authority are so impressive that there seems no possible point of contact with Protestants. Yet seen from within in the person of the men and women whom Rome nurtures and comforts, the Roman Church no less than

the Protestant churches has its divine treasure in earthen vessels. The dogmas of the church do not remove the divine mystery. They only point to the place where it is to be found. The theologians of the church do not solve the problems which in every age have baffled the intellect of man. They only define where those problems lie and point to the things which faith must hold if assurance is to be won.<sup>9</sup> The priests of the church do not lift from the individual the responsibility of standing at the last face to face with his God. The absolution they promise is conditioned upon personal penitence; and whether in any particular case penitence has been achieved, God alone can know. Even the Pope is not lifted above the limitations of humanity. He too is a fallible man who may make mistakes. Only in rare instances and under extraordinary safeguards does the Catholic Church claim even for the supreme pontiff that gift of infallibility the possession of which constitutes the unique claim of Rome to authority over the faithful.<sup>10</sup>

Catholics and Protestants share this experience of

<sup>9</sup> Students of theology are always tempted to simplify too much and to contrast Catholics and Protestants as representatives of a consistent and unchanging doctrine. But this is true only within narrow limits. On many points, and these among the most difficult and important, Protestants and Catholics are themselves divided. All the antitheses which separate the philosophers—the contrast between the realist and the idealist, the difference between the determinist and the advocate of free will, these and many another—meet us as we study the works of the fathers, of the schoolmen, and of the reformers. How should it be otherwise if what we have seen concerning the limitations of our common humanity is true.

<sup>10</sup> On the limitation and imperfection of contemporary Catholicism, *cf.* Adam, *op. cit.*, pp. 210–231.

limitation and of imperfection, but they do not always perceive its implications or draw its consequences. Those who share the limitations of finiteness, those who are brothered in the experience of sin, ought to be very patient with one another. They ought to remember the Savior's word about the mote and the beam, the word of St. Paul about the treasure in earthen vessels. We see clearly the imperfections of others and are acutely conscious of their sin. It is not always so easy for us to perceive the imperfection and the sin in ourselves. Yet that imperfection in ourselves, even when we recognize it, does not shake our faith that we may have contact with the perfect, and that sin, deeply as we regret it, does not quench our hope that we too may yet achieve the holy life. Why then should we not extend a like faith and hope to our fellow-Christians of other names who, like ourselves, are mortals destined for immortality.

Some years ago two friends were conversing about the intimacies of the religious life. One was a Roman Catholic, a man high in the councils of his church and often intrusted by the supreme authority with tasks of the very greatest responsibility; the other was a Protestant teacher of theology who had been for years a student of Catholic history and theology. "How does it happen," the Catholic asked the Protestant, "that you, a man who understands so well the genius of our Catholic piety, can remain outside the church?" "That is not an easy question to answer," said the other. "Do you want a perfectly frank answer?" "Yes," said the Catholic. "Tell me frankly what is



your reason?" "It is because," said the other, "when I contrast the claim of the Roman Church to a position of unique spiritual authority with the fruits of character which I should expect to follow from it if the claim were true, I do not find the contrast to the lives of other Christians marked enough to justify the assumption." There was a moment of silence. Then the Catholic looked his Protestant friend full in the eye and said, "I can well understand how you should feel like this."

What the thoughtful Protestant feels when he contemplates the failings of the men and women who are Catholics, the earnest Catholic feels when he contemplates the failings of the men and women who are Protestants. Whatever may be the relative claims of the churches we represent in the thought of God, we who are Catholics and Protestants are in our own persons alike sinners needing his forgiveness. 'Whatever form the unity of the church is ultimately to take, whether in the long testing of the ages the Catholic claim to present the final form of the church shall justify itself, or Protestantism still prove its right to retain its independent place in the family of God, the path that leads to the church of the future must be entered by humility and repentance. As only a united church can give convincing witness, so only a purified church can attain the unity that will bring conviction.

For limitation is not the last word. Catholics and Protestants share a faith that great as has been God's work in the past, the best is still to come; and that the Spirit who has inspired prophet and apostle, nerved

the martyr for his heroic gift of self, and sustained the saint in his quest for holiness is still at work in the world, ready at any moment to do for us more than we can ask or even think.

It is because, in spite of the imperfection of so many of her members, the church, both Catholic and Protestant, still proves the greatest of all available helps to the life of faith that our belief in her divine mission is justified. When we are disheartened by the obscurantism and self-seeking of imperfect churchmen past and present, we think of the great saints whom the church has nurtured and take heart of hope. Faulty though she be, even in her finest form, the church still carries at her heart the fire of an eternal life, and the spirit that is touched by that fire is set aflame.



*PART I (CONTINUED)*

*THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES*

CHAPTER IV

WHERE CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS DIFFER

1. What Makes People Catholic or Protestant.
2. How to Distinguish the Differences That Matter.
3. Differences Which Limit the Fellowship of Catholics with Protestants.
4. Differences Which Prevent Them From Acting Together.

*Of the many points on which Catholics and Protestants differ there are four which stand out above the rest because of the extent to which they limit spiritual fellowship and inhibit common action. These have to do (1) with the ideal of the Christian life; (2) with the nature of the Christian ministry; (3) with the relation of the church to other social institutions; and (4) with the relation of the different branches of the church to one another.*

*The first contrast is between the mystical ideal of piety and that which conceives the relation of God and man in personal, and hence in ethical (in contrast to institutional or legalistic) terms. The second is between the conception of the ministry as a priestly caste whose members, having been ordained by bishops who stand in the apostolic succession, have been endowed with the power to celebrate a valid sacrament, and the view of the ministry as a company of persons set apart from the universal priesthood of believers because they have received from God the prophetic gift. The third is the contrast between those who limit the function of the church to the celebration of public worship and the cultivation of the individual religious life, leaving to the state the responsibility for public morality, and those who believe the church has the responsibility for setting the standard for public as well as for private morality. The fourth is the contrast between those Christians who claim for their own church exclusive authority and those who admit the possibility of other autonomous units within the one Church of Christ.*

*On these four issues the line between Catholics and Protestants must be drawn at different points. On the first two issues Catholics of all schools take the first view, Protestants of all schools the second. On the third, Orthodox and Lutherans (with some Anglicans) hold the more restricted view of the church's function. All other Catholics and Protestants take the broader view of that function. On the fourth the Roman Church (and some Protestant sects) claims exclusive jurisdiction in the field of religion. All other Christian communions admit the possibility of parallel autonomous units within the one church.*

## 1. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE CATHOLIC OR PROTESTANT

Our survey of the points which Catholics and Protestants have in common has revealed such an impressive measure of agreement that it would be easy to conclude that the differences which separate them are negligible. That differences exist is, of course, undeniable, but of themselves they would seem to furnish no convincing reason for the denial of fellowship. Why, then, should we allow ourselves to perpetuate them? Why not think of them as the natural consequences of contrasts in temperament or accidents of environment such as divide people in other departments of life.

Accidental influences do play a part in determining the branch of the church to which an individual will belong. In spite of Rousseau and the philosophers who tell us of a state of nature in which all were alike, none of us enter the world on equal terms. We are born black or white, yellow or red. We are born British or American, French or German. In much the same way we are born Catholic or Protestant or, sad to say of many of us, not Christians at all. To Gandhi it seems the most natural thing in the world to be a Hindu, for it was through Hinduism that he first learned to know God. To the young Russian of today it seems equally natural to be an atheist, for he has been told that religion is the enemy of all that

he has learned to hold dear. The more earnest he is therefore, the more apt he will be to join the Society of the Godless. Whatever may be true of the contribution of heredity, we are all in large part the creatures of our environment; and what we shall believe, no less than what we shall do, is determined for us in no small degree by the decision, and still more by the example, of our parents.

That this is not the whole story goes without saying. Birth and environment account for much that happens to us, but not for all. Our parents may start us on a certain course, but whether we shall continue to follow it will depend in the last analysis upon ourselves. And this, true of all sides of our conduct—our business, our education, our friendships—is true also of our religion. There are Catholics who become Protestants and Protestants who become Catholics, and some people, once loyal and active church members, who break with religion altogether.

It is not easy to determine in detail what accounts for these changes. A multitude of different factors play their part. Chance enters in, or what we call chance. But when we have attributed to external influences all that is their due there remains a residuum that cannot thus be accounted for—something in the man himself that makes him what he is and so explains what he does. There are men who are artists by the grace of God, men who are bankers, men who are statesmen. So there are those who are by nature Catholics and those who are by nature Protestants, under whatever star they may be born.

Is this all that can be said? There are many who believe so. The kind of religion that will appeal to a man is determined, so these people think, by his temperament; whether he is a mystic or a man of the world, one who feels the need of authority or an independent and creative spirit. When we have found out concerning any individual what manner of person he is, we have learned all that can be known of the causes which determine the character of his religion.

This explanation, like most logically consistent explanations, simplifies too much. It rules out of court altogether, as mere rationalization, those deeper differences of conviction with which historic theology has to do. It was not thus that the great men from whom we date epochs in the history of religion conceived their personal problems. When Luther confronted the highest authorities of church and state with his affirmation "Here I stand, God helping me; I can do no other," he believed that he was expressing more than his own individual likes and dislikes. When Latimer, sent to the stake for teaching what his church condemned as heretical, turned to his timorous fellow-sufferer with the words "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, for we shall this day light such a candle in England as shall never be put out," he was confident that he was witnessing to eternal reality. Vital issues were being put to the test, verities to which a man must be true, even at the cost of life.

As we retrace the history of which these experiences were a part, we feel that Luther and Latimer were right. The differences which separate the



different kinds of Christians are neither unreal nor unimportant. Their roots penetrate deep and their branches extend far. The questions they raise affect man's social responsibility as well as his individual preference, and in the last analysis bring us face to face with the ultimate question of the nature of God and his purpose for his world. If we are to make progress in our work for a united church, we must take time to understand them and have the largeness of spirit to sympathize with them. For there is no one of us so wise that he can say with confidence: "All truth resides in me," no one so sure of himself but that he may learn from those to whom God's word has come in other ways.

## 2. HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE DIFFERENCES THAT MATTER

When we approach our subject in this spirit, we find ourselves embarrassed by the abundance of our material. For there is scarcely a subject which the mind of man has conceived on which Catholics and Protestants have not differed and do not differ today. Some of these differences are doctrinal in nature and express contrasted views of the nature of the physical universe, of the creation and fall of man, and of the relation of body and spirit. They reflect the influence of the current scientific theory prevalent at the time when the decision of the church was made. Others are the expression of permanent philosoph-

ical differences persisting from age to age and having their representatives in all the churches. Such are the age-long discussions between the advocates of predestination and free will or the representatives of the individual and the social gospel. Still others are the outcome of persistent temperamental differences such as those which James has discussed in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*<sup>1</sup> and which furnish their subject matter to the new discipline of the psychology of religion. Finally, we have the differences that are the inevitable consequence of institutional life in all its forms, the differences which result from conflict between the ins and the outs, the representatives of things as they are and the advocates of change, more or less radical.

If we are to make progress in our discussion of these differences we must find some principle that will determine their relative importance. This principle must be chosen not from the point of view of the individual simply—that would open up a field for endless discussion—but from the point of view of the church. What differences are so important that they determine the conditions of church membership? Or to put it more accurately, for we have seen that in all the churches there is a traditional element that no longer corresponds to present conditions: What differences are so important that they *ought* to determine the conditions of church membership? We need some working principle to help us here.

<sup>1</sup> James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1902),

Such a principle many advocates of church unity have found in the well-known dictum of St. Vincentius of Lerinum: "In the Church Catholic we must take great care that we hold that which has been believed by all, always, and everywhere." There is much sound wisdom in this ancient maxim. But if it is to help us, it must be interpreted in the light of the author's original purpose. As used by St. Vincentius—a good Catholic, interested above all in the tradition of the church—it was used to distinguish the beliefs which mattered for the church as a whole from the fluctuating opinions of parties or schools. We are interested just now not in agreements but in differences. Let us see how the Vincentian rule can help us to distinguish the differences that matter.

One help that it gives us is obvious on the face of it. It is the appeal to history. There are differences, as Catholics and Protestants alike would admit, that have had their day. These live on in the museums of the antiquarians and the textbooks of the theologians as beliefs once fondly cherished; but today they have lost their vitality. Even when they are still held they no longer matter for the church. No sensible Christian would commit the church to belief in an earth that was flat or a heaven that was arched; few to a Moses who wrote the account of his death or a Creator who, having finished making his earth in six days, found nothing more to do on the seventh. "History," said Harnack once to his class, "is full of ghosts, the ghosts of beliefs that were once alive but are now dead; and the historian, as he retraces for us

the story of the church of the past, can help us to recognize them for the unreal things they are." So the first of the Vincentian principles, that which is determined by the persistence of the belief, proves its usefulness as a criterion of the differences that matter.

There are differences that retain their vitality, but for some people only. They are divisive, but not everywhere. Such are the differences that divide men into parties and schools. (Some of these differences are theological in character—differences that have to do with the nature and the test of knowledge, with the origin of sin and the nature of atonement, with the two natures in the person of Christ; others have to do with the extent of the church's social mission or the type of discipline through which the saintly life is to be achieved. Here we find differences that matter, and that matter much. The history of theology is the story of the origin and of the varying fortunes of such significant differences. Yet they are not differences that should divide the church, for those who hold the rival views are found in all its branches, and the fact that they differ does not necessarily mean that they can have no fellowship with one another. These differences we must take account of, since clearly place must be made for them in any comprehensive view of the church; but for our present purpose, which is to define the contrast between Protestants and Catholics, they are not differences that matter for the church as a whole.

With the last of the Vincentian principles, that

which is believed by all, we enter more difficult ground. How shall we translate this into a principle that determines significant difference? What differences are there that are of concern to all Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike? No ready-made answer can be given to this question. For it is the answer of which our entire study is in search. But we can at least describe their nature so that we can recognize them when we find them.

The differences that matter to all Christians in their effort to realize God's ideal for his church are two, and only two: those which make fellowship between the members of the church impossible and those which inhibit their common action.

| Some years ago I was talking to one of the best-known Christians of Great Britain about the things that separate Christians. He was a man who, more than any of his countrymen, had won the confidence of the working men of his country because of his fearless advocacy of the application of Christian principles to economic issues. Yet, at the same time, he was the acknowledged leader of the Anglo-Catholic Party because of the depth and the sincerity of his religious life. "There are men," said this great Christian, "with whom I have worked shoulder to shoulder in every movement for social reform for twenty years to whom in all that concerns the intimacy of the religious life I remain to this day as much a stranger as on the day when I first met them."

What he had in mind, as the further conversation

revealed, was the barrier created by the different views of sacramental grace. To the speaker, a priest episcopally ordained possessed a power which separated him in kind from any other minister however learned or devout. To such a priest, and to him alone, had been committed the authority to celebrate a valid sacrament, and to ignore this difference in his approach to the communion would have been, in his judgment, to commit sacrilege. |

That is an example of a difference that matters. When men who call themselves Christian cannot see eye to eye or, if that is too much to ask, cannot feel heart to heart about the most sacred rite of their religion, the unity of the Christian church is parted, whatever ties of outward relationship may still remain. One may differ on a hundred points, both as to doctrine and as to conduct, but if the consciousness of fellowship in the experience of the divine grace remains unbroken, the first and the most essential condition of Christian unity is there. The pathos and the tragedy of the present situation consists in the fact that while such fellowship exists between Christians of many different communions, Protestant and Catholic alike, there are many in each church who in the things they deem essential still feel estranged from one another.

But community of feeling is not enough. Our fellowship must be able to express itself in common action. And here we meet another set of differences that matter. There are convictions which are held in common by Catholics and Protestants which are

not being translated into deed. There are ideals which, could they find expression in appropriate act, would change the atmosphere of communities which find no outlet in conduct.

I suppose there is no subject on which Christian people are more at one than in their opposition to war, no subject to which individual ministers have given more attention or where they can count on more general support from their congregations. Yet the forces which are pushing the nations toward war continue their unwearying pressure and the protests which are made by the church from time to time receive scant attention.

Why? Because those who make them are not agreed as to the kind of action which the situation requires of the church. There are some—it would appear an increasing number—who believe that war is so inconsistent with the mind of Christ that no true Christian should lend his countenance in any form to the military system of which it is the natural outcome and expression. There are others, hating war no less, who believe that under present conditions participation in it may under some circumstances become a Christian duty. The existence of these divided counsels robs the protest of the churches of its full force. Were all Christians really at one in their conviction as to what ought to be done, effective action would follow.

Similar limitations meet us whenever the church tries to exert an effective influence on social action. Even where there is agreement as to the end to be

sought, different views as to the method to be followed often make common action impossible.

### 3. DIFFERENCES WHICH LIMIT THE FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLICS WITH PROTESTANTS

When we approach the differences between Catholics and Protestants from this angle, we find four which stand out above the rest. They have to do (1) with the type of piety which it is God's purpose through his church to cultivate in man; (2) with the endowment which fits the church to perform its divinely appointed mission; (3) with the relation of the church to other social institutions, notably the state; and (4) with the relation of the different branches of the church to one another. These differences are not merely theological or ecclesiastical, but religious in nature. They affect the way Christians feel toward one another, and so the kind of fellowship which they can have with one another and the extent to which common witness is possible. If the differences between Catholic and Protestant were merely intellectual we could leave their adjustment to the theologians. If they were only legal, we could put the responsibility for dealing with them upon the ecclesiastics. But they affect the character of the religious life as a whole. Therefore they concern us all.

When we examine these differences more closely we discover this curious fact, that while they are



divisive in both the senses named above, as limiting fellowship and as inhibiting action, the line of division which they draw does not synchronize with that between Catholic and Protestant. There are some differences, such as those which determine the view of the nature of the church or of the type of piety which the church should cultivate, which separate Protestants from Catholics everywhere. There are others, such as those which have to do with the social mission of the church, where the cleavage cuts across ecclesiastical divisions, some Catholics agreeing with some Protestants, and *vice versa*. There are still others, such as those which define the relation of the churches to one another, in which we find the line drawn between a single Catholic body, that of Rome and all other Christians. This situation opens suggestive points of contact which deserve more careful analysis than has hitherto been given to them.

If one were to sum up in a single sentence the basic distinction between the Catholic attitude toward life and the Protestant attitude, one might say that the Catholic is one who believes that Jesus Christ has prescribed for his church a definite institutional form and made this the normal channel for the communication of his grace, whereas the Protestant is one who believes that God's grace is primarily communicated through the touch of person on person and that all matters of organization and administration are secondary. Schleiermacher expressed the contrast more than a century ago in a striking phrase when he said that in Catholicism the individ-

ual's relation to Christ is determined by his membership in the church, whereas in Protestantism his membership in the church is determined by his relation to Christ.<sup>2</sup>

This difference is rooted in differing conceptions of God and of his relation to man. Protestants believe that human personality, imperfect as it is, gives us our most trustworthy symbol of God and our most direct means of access to him. Catholics believe that the divine life is so different in kind that it can be entered only through the suppression of important aspects of the personal life as we now know it.

We may express this contrast by saying that Catholic piety is on the whole of the mystical type, whereas Protestant piety is predominantly ethical. The Catholic believes that he serves God best in the measure that he withdraws from the world and enters upon the contemplative life; the Protestant that he is most pleasing to God when he carries into the work to which God has called him in the world the spirit of prayer. The contrast, to be sure, is not absolute. Catholic mysticism is not the completely other-worldly mysticism of the East, but is consistent with a genuinely ethical interest, while Protestant piety has often been of a mystical and contemplative character. Here, as so often in the history of religion, we have to do with a difference of emphasis or of tendency rather than with two mutually exclusive ideals.

Nevertheless the contrast is there and is exercising

<sup>2</sup> Schleiermacher, Friedrich, *The Christian Faith*, Eng. tr. by Mackintosh, H. R., and Stewart, J. S. (Edinburgh and New York, 1928), p. 103.

a far-reaching influence upon the character of Catholic piety. This appears most clearly when we consider the monastic life; for it is here that the Catholic ideal of sainthood receives its clearest definition. In many Catholic books of devotion the life of the saint is described as radically different from that which is open to man by nature, so different that the classical Catholic writers do not hesitate to describe the process by which it is brought to birth in man as deification. It is a process of self-mortification in which not only the sins of the flesh but its legitimate indulgence is abandoned. Virginity is rated higher than marriage and the monastic life, with its vows of poverty and obedience, brings man closer to God than life in the world.

Protestantism asks of the candidate for sainthood no such abnegation. Its aim is not the suppression of the personality, but its enhancement and enrichment. What man needs, so Protestants teach, is not a deified nature, but a right relationship to God, a relationship into which one enters through trust in God's forgiveness and complete submission to his will.

In a Catholic book of devotion, much loved by the late Cardinal Mercier, this counsel is given to the soul in quest of perfection:

"Therefore be not so agitated and eager. Know that God must give your will, his well-beloved spouse, the sleep of death; your will must fall asleep in him. When he has given it this sleep, oh then will arise God's heirs and your sons. These will be the acts of life and vigor which belong to true piety, living and fruitful piety. They are both the reward

of God who worketh in you, and of your womb; of yours who work with him." <sup>3</sup>

Such a conception is foreign to the genius of Protestant piety. In conversion, as Protestants understand it, the will is not put to sleep. On the contrary it was never more intensely alive. What is surrendered is not the will, but the sinful desires which impel it to wrong activity. The Christian after conversion, as before, is still to live his life in the world, but with a new purpose and in a new relationship. <sup>4</sup>

This conception of the nature of the Christian ideal determines the view of the means by which its attainment is cultivated. It helps us to understand the Catholic view of the priesthood, the central place given to the sacraments as the divinely appointed means for introducing man to the spiritual life and the complicated discipline by which the will is trained for its task of renunciation. For the Protestant, Catholic piety seems to consist in doing a number of different things, each of them in itself unimportant—telling beads, saying prayers, going on pilgrimages, giving alms. To each of these merit is attached and on the faithful performance of each progress in the Christian life depends. It is not thus that he thinks of the holy life, but as of something simple, spon-

<sup>3</sup> *The Interior Life*, ed. by Tissot, J., Eng. tr. by Mitchell, W. H. (London, 1913), p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that the change which is required of the Protestant in conversion is not radical—so radical that it can rightly be described as a new birth—but only that the kind of life into which it introduces him is still in a true sense human, the kind of life which requires for its full development the cultivation of all the normal activities of man, not their suppression.

taneous, natural, the response of the whole personality to that initial gift of himself in self-sacrificing love through which God reveals himself to man.

It is not strange that when ideals differ so widely those who hold them should find it difficult to understand and still more difficult to sympathize with one another. To many Protestants, the Catholic seems to be living in an unreal world, a world in which the standards which should govern the life of man in society have been abandoned for those of a self-centred and morbid piety. To many Catholics the life that Protestants are living seems easy-going and self-indulgent and the ideal by which they measure progress to differ little from that of those whose philosophy is frankly secular. Only as they grow to know one another better and come to understand the inner spring by which the life of each is nourished do points of contact begin to appear. When the Protestant, forgetting for the moment his inherited prejudice, reads the story of a great mystic like St. Catherine of Siena or, coming closer to modern times, of an enclosed nun like St. Thérèse of Mount Carmel, he begins to realize that in the breasts of these solitaries a passionate love was burning and that the motive which led them to turn their backs upon the world was the conviction that through their life of interior prayer they could bring to their brothers in the world help not possible in any other way. So as the Catholic penetrates more deeply into the secret of Protestant piety he may perceive that here too religious motives are at work and what often seems

to him mere selfish engrossment in the every-day tasks of scientific research or of secular business may have its explanation in the conviction that God is to be found in the haunts of men as truly as in the solitude of the cell, and that he worships him most truly who takes most seriously the word of the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." <sup>5</sup>

A second point at which the difference between Catholic and Protestant makes fellowship difficult is in the view taken of the nature and authority of the Christian ministry. Catholics and Protestants agree that God has furnished his church with a ministry and that upon its efficient discharge of its function the health and welfare of the church depends. But they differ in their conception of the nature of that function and of the endowment that fits a man to perform it. To the Catholic the ministry is a priestly caste, endowed through episcopal ordination with supernatural power not shared by the laity, the power, namely, to interpret the creed and to administer the sacraments. For the Protestant the ministry is that part of the universal priesthood to which God has granted prophetic gifts which fit them in special degree for the ministry of the Word.

To the Protestant therefore preaching is the most characteristic<sup>6</sup> function of the Christian ministry, since it is the form in which the highest privilege of the Christian, that of personal witness, finds social expression. In the sermon, as the great Protestant

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 25:40.

<sup>6</sup> Not necessarily the most important.

preachers have conceived it, the eternal truth of God is passed through the crucible of a living soul to be given back in the form of teaching to the hearts and consciences of those who need it. A sermon is not a lecture. It is not a discourse. It is witness, the living Word spoken to living men by one to whom God has himself first spoken.

It is natural then that the Protestant should resent any attempt by the church to limit the freedom of the preacher to witness to the truth of God as it has been given him to see it. Protestants recognize that there must be some standard by which the preacher's witness must be tested, but it must be one which is God-given and which is therefore accessible to all. Such a standard Protestants find in the Bible. The Bible is the book in which God's message to man is stated in such clear and simple, more than this, in such direct and practical, form that the sincere spirit reading its pages with open mind hears God speaking directly to his soul. So read it becomes what Protestants have loved to call it, the Word of God, the medium of his direct communication to the receptive spirit.

Catholics, too, recognize that the Bible fulfils this function, and in every age devout spirits have fed their souls upon it. But to the Catholic the Bible is more than this. It is a law book, to which he goes for information as to the constitution which God has given to his church and the laws which should regulate its activity. Like every law book, it requires an interpreter, and that interpreter God has provided

in the hierarchy of the church, to whom alone it belongs in the case of differences of opinion, to determine the sense in which the teaching of the Bible is to be understood, and to whom from time to time he has imparted further revelations of his will by which the original message of the Bible is to be clarified and supplemented.

The priesthood as the Catholic conceives it has an even higher office than this. It is not only guardian of divine truth, but channel of divine grace. This office it discharges through its administration of the sacraments. To the Catholic the sacrament is a mystery, a holy rite endowed by God with a life-giving power and as such functioning irrespective of the character of the priest who administers it. It is the way in which the divine nature, which was first introduced into humanity by the miracle of the incarnation, is transmitted to later generations through the mediation of the church, which thus becomes in a true sense the continuation of the incarnation and sharer in all the properties which during his life on earth separated the Incarnate Word from all other men.

Such a view of the sacrament challenges the Protestant conception of the true relation of God to man at its centre, for it substitutes for the conception of revelation through the Word, or in other words through the message of a person to persons, one which functions by other means and is therefore independent of ethical control. To the Protestant the sacrament is a form of the Word, the Word acted as distinct from the Word spoken, and like the Word



it fulfils its function through its direct appeal to the will through the intellect.

Both Protestants and Catholics believe that the efficacy of the sacrament is dependent in part upon the spirit and interest of the person who receives it. But the experience which the sacrament makes possible to the Protestant is consciously mediated. To the Catholic it is an experience which takes place in man's subconscious life. It is a stage in that deification of human nature which it is the function of the church to promote. It is not that the Catholic affirms and the Protestant denies the real presence in the sacrament, but that the manner of Christ's presence is differently conceived. To the Protestant it is the revelation of a person to persons, using the methods through which personal communication takes place. To the Catholic it is a mystical presence different in kind from that which is possible in any other way. Hence the sacrament has an importance to the Catholic greater than it ordinarily has to the Protestant. Catholic religion has been on the whole and in the large sacramental religion. Protestant religion has been Biblical, that is, doctrinal religion.

This difference appears most clearly in the doctrine of apostolic succession, the doctrine that the power to celebrate a valid sacrament is dependent upon ordination by a bishop who himself stands in the line of direct succession from the Apostles. Protestants, too, believe in an apostolic succession, but it is spiritual in nature, the unbroken succession of those who have received from God the prophetic gift

and who become, therefore, the channels through which the word of God is imparted to those for whom it was meant.

At first view the Catholic view of the sacrament appears to most Protestants superstitious, not to say magical, since it seems to make spiritual experience dependent upon physical acts. Yet the further the devout Protestant penetrates into the mysteries of nature, the more the sharp line the theologians used to draw between body and spirit becomes blurred, the greater appears the rôle that subconscious influences play in our most sacred and intimate experiences. And when the Protestant watches the devout Catholic in his use of the sacrament, he discovers that at unexpected points the type of his experience approximates to his own. When the Catholic bows in prayer at the elevation of the Host at High Mass, he does not need to communicate physically like the priest in order to experience the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. Christ is present as truly in the heart of the believer as in the host on the altar.<sup>7</sup> All that is necessary for the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Alice Meynell's poem "The Unknown God," quoted in *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923), p. 151:

"One of the crowd went up  
And knelt before the Paten and the Cup,  
Received the Lord, returned in peace, and prayed  
Close to my side—then in my heart I said:

'O Christ, in this man's life,  
This stranger who is Thine in all his strife,  
All his felicity, his good and ill,  
In the assaulted stronghold of his will;

'I do confess Thee here,  
Alive within this life.'"

appropriation of the benefits of Christ's sacrifice is the right attitude of spirit.

From this point of view the practice of reservation (so often regarded by Protestants as involving a magical conception of Christ's presence in the sacrament) may be interpreted as an approximation to the Protestant position, since it affirms the perpetual presence of the incarnate Christ with his people and denies that for the appropriation of the benefits of that presence any direct physical contact is necessary.<sup>8</sup> When the Catholic tries to understand the sacramental experience of the Protestant he, too, may find points of contact with his own. It is not the Catholic only who holds an *ex opere operato* theory of the working of God's grace. The Protestant also holds it, only he puts it in a different place. It is to Christ's work on the Cross that he attributes finality, and this quite apart from any act of the recipient of his grace. Since it belongs to the nature of God that what he does is incommensurate with any act we may be able to perform, our salvation must depend in the last analysis upon something that takes place outside ourselves.

When, passing from theory to practice, the Catholic observes what happens to Protestants in their use of the sacraments he perceives that something of the grace which he himself experiences is imparted to them. So much is this the case that a Roman Catholic scholar like Adam can admit that there are cases in which a sacrament administered by a Prot-

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Vidler, A. R., *Magic and Religion* (London, 1930).

estant may be not only objectively a means of grace but subjectively efficacious,<sup>9</sup> and the Anglican bishops at their meeting at Lambeth in 1930, with the acquiescence of the Anglo-Catholics among their members, recognized the propriety of those Anglican communicants to whom access to the sacrament was for geographical reasons not possible, communicating at a service conducted by a non-episcopally ordained minister.<sup>10</sup>

Thus closer acquaintance dissipates misunderstanding and reveals unsuspected points of agreement. It does not eliminate the differences between Catholics and Protestants. It does not even diminish their

<sup>9</sup> "Non-Catholic sacraments have the power to sanctify and save, not only objectively, but also subjectively. It is therefore conceivable also, from the church's standpoint, that there is a true, devout and Christian life in those non-Catholic communions which believe in Jesus and baptize in His Name. We Catholics regard this Christian life, wherever it appears, with unfeigned respect and with thankful love." Adam, Karl, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, p. 167.

<sup>10</sup> *Lambeth Conference, 1930* (New York, 1930), "Special Areas (No. 42)" under "Resolutions," pp 52-53:

"The Conference, maintaining as a general principle that intercommunion should be the goal of, rather than a means to, the restoration of union, and bearing in mind the general rule of the Anglican Churches that 'members of the Anglican Churches should receive the Holy Communion only from ministers of their own Church,' holds, nevertheless, that the administration of such a rule falls under the discretion of the Bishop, who should exercise his dispensing power in accordance with any principles that may be set forth by the national, regional or provincial authority of the Church in the area concerned. The Bishops of the Anglican Communion will not question the action of any Bishop who may, in his discretion so exercised, sanction an exception to the general rule in special areas, where the ministrations of an Anglican Church are not available for long periods of time or without travelling great distances, or may give permission that baptized communicant members of Churches not in communion with our own should be encouraged to communicate in Anglican Churches, when the ministrations of their own Church are not available, or in other special or temporary circumstances."

importance. But it shows that in spite of these differences fellowship may still be possible.

#### 4. DIFFERENCES WHICH PREVENT THEM FROM ACTING TOGETHER

So far we have been speaking of differences which limit religious fellowship. There is another group of influences no less divisive—those which prevent common action. These result from the fact that we are not dealing with groups of isolated individuals who are free to act according to their inclinations, but with members of corporate bodies with definite constitutions and laws. The existence of these laws limits the freedom of the members who live under them and may prevent common action even when they are agreed.

When we study the relations of Catholics and Protestants from this new angle we find that a different grouping is necessary, for the ecclesiastical differences follow only in part the lines of religious cleavage. We find conceptions of the constitution and authority of the church which separate Catholics from their fellow-Catholics quite as sharply as they do from their Protestant fellow-Christians. And within Protestantism too we find ecclesiastical differences which inhibit common action.

The first of these cleavages and the most far-reaching in its consequences is the one which separates the Church of Rome from all other Christian bodies. Roman Catholics, as we have seen, hold that

God has entrusted the supreme authority in his church to the Pope, who as the successor of Peter is the vicar of Christ and his authorized representative in the government of his church on earth. Hence all who reject his authority are heretical and schismatic, whether their piety be of the Catholic or of the Protestant type. All non-Roman Catholics reject the claims of the Papacy to be the divinely prescribed form of government for all Christians. Their view of the church is federal, and the units of which it is composed are autonomous national churches which, having in common the creeds, the sacraments, and the Episcopate, accept as their supreme authority a general synod in which all are represented.<sup>11</sup>

Most Protestants deny that any particular form of organization is necessary for the church, though there is a high-church party in every Protestant denomination which holds to a *jure divino* theory of the ministry (Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, as the case may be).

In spite of this many Protestants have a high sense of the spiritual significance of the organized church and would be willing to accept an episcopal form of government if it could be dissociated from the sacerdotal quality which most Catholics attribute

<sup>11</sup> I use the word "federal" in default of a better to describe a conception of the church which conceives of its unity as consistent with the existence within the total body of autonomous units. This view is held in common by Orthodox and Anglo-Catholics, though the nature of the co-ordinate units is differently defined. Anglo-Catholics commonly think of the Catholic Church as consisting of three major divisions: Roman, Orthodox, and Anglican. The Orthodox view makes place for a larger number of independent units and so approximates more closely to the view held by most Protestants.

to it. There is, however, a left wing in Protestantism composed of the more extreme individualists (*e.g.*, Baptists, Friends) who look with suspicion upon any form of centralized government for the church.

A further point of difference in the conception of the organized church has to do with the extent of its social responsibility, more particularly with its relation to the other most inclusive social organization, the state. Here the Orthodox and the Lutherans find themselves on common ground, while the position of most other Protestants approximates that of the Roman Church. Both the Orthodox and the Lutherans would confine the function of the church to the celebration of public worship and the cultivation of the religious life of the individual Christian, that cultivation being conceived in each case in the way that is appropriate to its own peculiar type of piety. Other Protestant churches, in this following the precedent set by the Church of Rome, regard the church as responsible for setting social as well as individual standards. As to the particular standard to be held up and as to the methods which are appropriate in its prosecution, we find wide variety of procedure; but the differences are differences of application, not of principle.

When people of goodwill differ and wish to resolve their differences the natural first step is conference. But here workers for church unity meet an unexpected obstacle, for the Church of Rome, the most important of all the parties to any proposed

program of reunion, refuses to take part in any official conference. In the view of Rome there is nothing about which to confer, since she already possesses the correct solution. It is for the other parties to the controversy to accept her point of view. *Roma locuta est, causa finita est* is still Rome's sole contribution to the discussion of church unity.

There was a time when the attitude of Rome was typical of that of all the larger churches. Each was sure it was right and the others were wrong. This being the case there was nothing to be gained by conference. Let each go its own way and the truth would win its victory in the end.

Fortunately most of us have passed beyond this stage. Conference between the representatives of the non-Roman churches, Catholic and Protestant alike, is not only possible; it is actually going on. And this on a world-wide scale and over the whole range of points under dispute.

But conference is only the first stage. It must be followed by appropriate action. And here the inhibitions are still many. They meet us in the field of worship. They meet us in the field of witness. Until they are overcome the unity of the church is still a unity of faith rather than of sight.

The most familiar illustration of the divisive effect of existing church law is the fact that over wide reaches of the church common participation in the Eucharist is impossible. I have elsewhere shown<sup>12</sup> that even in spite of this barrier the Eucharist is in

<sup>12</sup> See Chap. III, pp. 58-61.



a very real sense a point of union between Christians, and even when church law makes common celebration impossible there are yet ways in which Christians of different branches of the church can share their common experience of the sacrament. Nevertheless there is an anomaly in the present situation that must cause every devout Christian sincere pain. That the sacrament which more than all others our Lord designed as a mark of the unity of his disciples should remain to this day an advertisement of their divisions, is nothing short of a scandal; and it is difficult to believe that the enlightened consciousness of the church will be content to accept it as a permanency.

When one turns to the things which hinder Christians in the performance of the other side of the Christian's activity—that of common witness—one is embarrassed by the abundance of the available material. It meets us on all sides of the church's life. It meets us in so simple a matter as the distribution of churches and of ministers, small communities having three or four, or it may be a dozen, competing congregations, while in some neighboring city there are areas destitute of the ministry of any Christian church. It meets us in the inadequate training given to the Christian ministry and in the insufficient provision made for their support when they have reached the end of their active ministry. It meets us still more flagrantly when we consider the half-hearted way in which the church is dealing with major social evils such as unemployment, race discrimination, and

war. Here there are honest differences of conviction no doubt, of which we must take account, such as those which separate the Orthodox from the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans from their fellow-Protestants who are believers in the social gospel. But beyond these honest differences there is a field where agreement exists and action is called for, and yet where it is not taking place. The weight of the machinery which we have created to promote action acts as a drag and while we are discussing rights and powers the opportunity passes and the word spoken comes too late.

It is conditions such as these which give the movement for corporate union its fundamental importance. Were it merely a matter of differing forms of organization, one could dismiss it as of minor significance. Yet when these differences lead to individual, often to conflicting, action where a united front is called for; when, further, they are given religious significance and made reasons for admitting or refusing fellowship, they can no longer be dismissed as of subordinate or individual concern. For they limit the church in its supreme function, that of witness to the world of a love that can transcend all differences. It is from this angle that Christ's high-priestly prayer acquires the central importance that the instinct of the church has always assigned to it when he gave as his reason for desiring the unity of his disciples "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> John 17:21.



*PART I (CONTINUED)*

*THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES*

CHAPTER V

THE PERMANENT AND THE CHANGING IN THE  
LIFE OF THE CHURCH

1. How Our Present Divisions Came to Be.
2. The Mission of the Church in a Changing World.
3. Changing Aspects of the Church's Thought and Life.
4. Catholicism and Protestantism as Persistent Types of Churchly Christianity.

*The problem of the relation between permanence and change which meets us in every phase of social life recurs in connection with the church. This question meets us in two forms: one the question how our present divisions came to be; the other the question why there should have been divisions at all. Whatever our ultimate explanation, the immediate cause of the existing divisions of the church is the fact that God has set his church in a world in which everything that is alive is growing, that the process of growth is a process of continual adjustment to a continually changing environment, and that this process takes place at a varying tempo according to the varying capacities of those who have to make the adjustment.*

*This process may be illustrated along all sides of the Christian life—intellectual, moral, and institutional. It becomes important, therefore, to distinguish the permanent mission of the church as witness to God's revelation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ from the changing forms which that witness may take as a result of man's growth in knowledge and development (or deterioration) in character.*

*From the problems which are the outgrowth of the church's historic development must be distinguished those which result from the persistence side by side within the church of contrasted types of religious attitude and experience. Of such contrasted types the most important are those which we have come to call Catholic and Protestant.*

## 1. HOW OUR PRESENT DIVISIONS CAME TO BE

The situation with which we were confronted in the preceding chapters is one which must cause every earnest Christian deep concern. If, as Christians believe, it is God's purpose to reveal his will to man through his church, how has it come to pass that the church as we see it today should present such a spectacle of ineffectiveness and disunion? How reconcile the claim of the church to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, with the many independent and competing bodies in which alone it meets us today?

There are two ways in which we may seek an answer to this question: the historian's way and the philosopher's way. We may retrace the history of the church from the beginning so far as our available records make it possible for us to do so, showing how in its effort to adapt itself to its changing environment the informal type of organization which had sufficed for the needs of the primitive church was replaced by another which was more elaborate; how with the growth of internal division new safeguards had to be devised which in turn gave birth to new divisions; how when the tension grew too acute the organization devised proved unable to stand the strain and new bodies came into existence claiming to be the true church, which the parent body rejected as heretical or schismatic.

Back of the technical question how the particular divisions which we see today came to be there is a deeper question, a question philosophical rather than historical in nature: why there should have been divisions at all. It is a question with which in every age the mind of man has wrestled without being able completely to penetrate its mystery. But whatever our ultimate explanation of the mystery may be, the immediate cause of the existing divisions of the church is the fact that God has set his church in the midst of a world in which everything that is alive is growing; that the process of growth is a process of continual adjustment to a continually changing environment, and that this process takes place at a varying tempo according to the varying capacities of those who must make the adjustment.

We may illustrate this process along all the lines of man's development. It is true of man's intellectual life. It is not only true that in man's effort to understand his universe new issues are continually emerging and old solutions proving inadequate, but that in every effort to cope with the new issues when they arise men show varying degrees of ability. What the leaders have seen they are often unable to impart, so that centuries after some new insight has found its first expression the mass of men may be still living as if no new discovery had been made.

It is so no less in man's moral life. Men differ not only in their capacity to see, but in their ability to adjust themselves to what they see. Long after Jesus had given the example of the life of love men who

called themselves his disciples were debating as to who should have the first places in his kingdom, and when we read the letters of the Apostle Paul we find him obliged to deal with elements of morality that the mature Christian should long ago have been able to take for granted.

It is still so with us today. We are Christians in name; many of us, we hope, are sincere in our adoption of the Christian ideal; but what this ideal implies for daily living we see very imperfectly, and even what we see we practise more imperfectly still.

Nor is this all, for we are not isolated individuals, but members of a society in which the insights of the past have found institutional expression. Doctrines have become dogmas and prayer has taken the form of liturgy. What was once a collection of letters designed for a practical purpose and a series of brief notes summing up the disciples' memories of the Master's words and deeds has become a Bible, to each sentence of which infallibility is attributed. This process has its good side, since it conserves insights which might otherwise have been lost. But it has its dangerous side as well, since it tends to make men inhospitable to new insights when they come.

The divisions which separate Christians take the form not only of differing philosophies of life which can be discussed on their merits, but of rival institutions, each claiming to be the custodian of the truth of God. Looked at from the historical standpoint we can see that this development was natural: perhaps more than this, that it was inevitable. Looked at from



the point of view of our Christian duty, it faces us with a problem of the first magnitude.

Before we attempt to discuss this problem in detail it becomes important therefore for us to ask ourselves the primary question: What is the function of the church in this changing society? What is the divine treasure which, in this world of imperfection, it is set to guard and to share?

## 2. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN A CHANGING WORLD

If this question had been asked a Christian of an older generation, he would have had no difficulty in giving his answer. The church, he would have said, is here to transmit God's revelation to man and to help him to live the kind of life to which God calls him. The answer is still true. But to many of our generation it has lost its meaning because of the conventional terms in which it is put. They are living in an environment in which "Nature" is the great word, not God, and they have been taught that the way to discover nature's secret is through experiment rather than by revelation.

The world in which we are living is still the same world in which our fathers believed they had heard God speaking, and the questions to which we seek an answer are still the questions which our fathers were asking: What is the kind of life that promises the most enduring satisfaction? What

must I do that that satisfaction may become mine? It may be that the difficulty many of our contemporaries find with our Christian teaching is not so much with the answer we give as with the language in which we give it. Let us see if we can describe the function of the church in a vocabulary which the young people of this generation can understand.

Shall we say, then, that in a world where everything is changing it is the function of the church to bring us into touch with the realities that outlast change? This is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. The church is not the only institution that is concerned with the permanent in contrast to the changing. This is true also of the school and of the state. We go to school to be taught science. And science is the name we give to those processes of mind by which we distinguish amid the multitude of phenomena the things that last from the things that pass away. We call the discoveries which we make in this way laws and the reality of which they are the description "Nature." Nature, considered as the totality of existence functioning under law, is a reality that lasts, and we go to school in order to make its acquaintance.

Nature, as science teaches us to understand it, is not the whole of reality. There is an ideal world as well to which our affections and our loyalties introduce us. This ideal world, the home of value and of meaning, is the subject with which philosophy is concerned—philosophy, not in the academic form in which it meets us in many contemporary university

courses, but in its original meaning, as the quest of wisdom. Philosophy is concerned with the ultimate goods of which the heart of man has always been in quest—beauty, justice, love. And the reality in which these supreme goods find their highest embodiment philosophy, like religion, calls God.

Both science and philosophy are activities of the mind, and as such partial. Man is more than intellect. He is affection and will as well. And as the school is the institution for the cultivation of the intellectual life of man, so there are institutions whose primary function is the cultivation of these other sides of his nature. Among these the most important are the state and the church.

No institution of the modern world has been the subject of more animated debate than the state. How far the state, in the comprehensive sense of that term, should be identified with the political state as we know it today—the institution which is concerned with the protection of the life and property of its members and for that purpose exercises the needed sovereignty; how far it should be extended to include other forms of social functioning, we need not here discuss. We recognize that the state, as a law-making and law-enforcing body, is not concerned with all the interests of its citizens, even so far as they concern life and property, but only with their dominant interests, those that outlast change and persist from generation to generation. Security, therefore, is an essential interest of the state. It, too, though in its own way, is concerned with realities that last.

The church, then, has no monopoly of this interest. What differentiates it from the state and the school is the way in which it conceives man's relation to the ultimate reality and its own function in cultivating that relation. Whereas the school (understanding by this the sum of man's intellectual activities as expressed in science and philosophy) is content to approach God by the way of the mind, it is the aim of the church to bring the whole personality, emotion and will, as well as intellect, into touch with God. Whereas the state (understanding by this the sum of man's efforts to establish a stable social order) is content to deal with God indirectly through creating the social conditions which conform to his will, the church aims to open the way for man's direct access to God. This direct access is what we mean by worship.

Worship is the primary business of the church. But again we must be careful about our definition. If by worship we mean only what many people understand by the term, the singing of hymns and the saying of prayers, it will be difficult to arouse much enthusiasm for the church among many of our contemporaries. But worship is something other and finer than this. It is the response of the whole personality to that which is inherently excellent, the discovery of the supreme reality which answers man's deepest need and makes of each action done in response to its appeal a thrilling adventure. It is the function of the church to introduce man to this supreme excellence and, having done so, to help

him cultivate the life which is fitting for those who have discovered that great good.

We see now why sainthood holds so central a place in the church's teaching concerning the ideal life for man. For sainthood is only the religious name for a life that takes perfection for its goal. What differentiates the religious life from secularism in all its forms is its faith that a life is possible to man for which God has set the model and the resolve, by God's help, to achieve that life, cost what it may.

The quest of sainthood is characteristic of the religious life in all its forms. But the nature of the holiness to be sought differs according to the conception of the divine which sets the standard. In Buddhism—and in this the Buddhist is typical of the mystics of all schools—one achieves the holy life in the measure that one divests oneself of one's familiar human habits and desires, turns thought inward, and in the life of interior contemplation acquires a detachment so complete that no earthly happening, whether of pleasure or pain, has any longer any meaning.

It was not so that Jesus conceived the saintly life. To him fellowship with God involved the enhancement of personality, not its suppression. God, as Jesus conceived him, was love, and his nature was best expressed through such a familiar human symbol as fatherhood. Hence the perfect life to which he bade his disciples aspire was a life of fellowship which expressed itself in mutual helpfulness, a life in which the good of each brought happiness to all.

It is only when we leave the general field of the philosophy of religion and concentrate on the new thing that Jesus brought into the world that we can appreciate the distinctive mission of the Christian church. That mission is not simply to remind men of the fact of God, though it is that. It is not simply to make clear to consciousness what God is like in his wisdom, his righteousness, and his love; though that, too, is its function. It is to assure men that in this world of chance and change God is a factor with which they must reckon. He is not merely a spectator looking on from some distant heaven at the mechanism which he has brought into being. God is in his world today, actively at work, as he has been from the beginning. In Jesus Christ, his Word made flesh, he has given himself for man's salvation, and by his present Spirit makes this gift effective in the life of the individual, as of the church.

The church of Christ, therefore, so far as it is loyal to its founder, can never be content with a purely other-worldly religion. As God in Christ entered humanity to share its experience and taste its suffering, so his church must carry on its heart the needs and sorrows of mankind, sharing in all their experiences and carrying to the remotest corner of the world its message of redemptive and sacrificial love.

This helps us at another point at which the conventional presentation of the church's function often fails to arouse the enthusiasm of young people. We have spoken of the church's mission as designed to bring people into touch with realities that last.

What religion offers, so its ministers tell us, is security in a world of change. But it is not security of which our young people feel most in need. It is adventure of which they are in search, and danger. Rob life of its risks and you rob it of its charm. Not for them the quiet of the monastery or the nunnery. For them the struggle with their fellows for success, for prestige, for a richer and a fuller social life.

It is just such a life to which Jesus summons. The task to which he calls can promise no immediate success. It offers no guarantee against failure, no immunity from suffering. The God he reveals is a God who did not spare his Son the scourge and the cross. But one thing God had to give which made the scourge and the cross worth all they cost—the assurance of ultimate victory and a heart at peace.

If we are to sum up the function of the Christian church in a single word, that word must be “witness”—witness to the fact of God as he has made himself known to man through Jesus Christ in redemptive love, and as he is still making himself known in lives that are being transformed by his present Spirit.

### 3. CHANGING ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH'S THOUGHT AND LIFE

It is against the background of this conception of the church's function that we must understand the changing views of her mission as they are revealed to us by a survey of her history. They are the conse-

quences which necessarily follow when growing, and so imperfect, men attempt to discharge an unchanging function in an environment which is constantly changing.

In a breezy book entitled *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*,<sup>1</sup> President Andrew D. White has described one aspect of this process of ceaseless readjustment, namely, the readjustment made necessary by the advent of new scientific discovery. The story of this readjustment has been often told and it is not necessary to retell it here. It is important, however, to remind ourselves that the slowness with which the church has adjusted herself to the changes in scientific outlook is due to no particular obscurantism on the part of the representatives of religion, but is simply the expression in this particular sphere of the conservatism with which representatives of older views always resist the new. This conservatism is quite as much in evidence in the history of science as in the history of religion. Indeed, in this particular case it is simply the reflection on the part of religious teachers of the resistance with which the more conservative scientists were meeting the invaders in their own field. What is significant for our present purpose is not that when changes were first proposed the church resisted them, but that when they had proved their validity she accepted them. The continual readjustment of her theology, which is often held up against the church as a weakness, is really a mark of her strength. A

<sup>1</sup> (New York, 1910.)



church that is building for eternity cannot afford to be in a hurry. For her above all other institutions the counsel holds: "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good."<sup>2</sup>

The changes in the formulation of the church's teaching have their counterpart in corresponding changes in the forms of her organization. Here, too, we have to do with a development in which institutional forms and practices are being continually modified in order to meet corresponding changes in the social environment. The development of the monarchical episcopate was such a change; the recognition of the primacy of Peter another; the rise of national churches in close dependence upon the state another; the development of powerful churches through the free association of autonomous congregations still another; and the end is not yet.

Nor must it be overlooked that the development has not been uniform. There has been progress no doubt, but it has been matched by corresponding deterioration. In the history of the church, as in all human history, sin has had its part to play. Here again the ancient proverb holds true: *corruptio optimi pessima*. There is no fall so shocking as that of a minister of religion, no failure so disastrous as that of the institution which claims to speak in the name of God.

The imperfection which is thus inherent in institutional Christianity has been clearly recognized by theologians, both Catholic and Protestant. No

<sup>2</sup> I Thess. 5:21.

church has carried its claim to be the spokesman of God to greater lengths than the Roman Catholic Church. Yet in his book, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, Professor Karl Adam, one of the ablest of contemporary Catholic scholars, has this to say of the imperfections of the church:

“That there is no perfect equation between the ideal and the real, that actual Catholicism lags considerably behind its idea, that it has never yet appeared in history as a complete and perfect thing, but always as a thing in process of development and laborious growth: such is the testimony of ecclesiastical and social history, and it is unnecessary to establish these points in detail. The primitive church was never at any time a church ‘without spot or wrinkle’ as St. Paul puts it. One need only to read his epistles and the epistles of St. James and St. John, and for a later period to consult Hermas, Irenæus, and Tertullian, to find that the early church for all its brilliant light had grievously dark shadows also. And the same is true in general of the church throughout the centuries. As long as Catholicism lasts, it will feel the need for reform, for a more perfect assimilation of its actuality to the ideal which illumines its path.”<sup>3</sup>

Protestantism, too, can boast no immunity from human imperfection. Inspired like all movements for reform by the highest ideals, it soon discovered that the evils against which it was a protest made their reappearance within its own ranks. It, too, developed abuses against which protest was necessary, and in its quest for a higher type of Christianity found itself hampered by the imperfection of the human instrument, which must translate ideal into achievement.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 210-211 (New York, 1929).

The history of the church shows us a composite canvas in which evil and good are inextricably interwoven. There have been periods when one whose life was nurtured on the Gospel might well despair of the church that claimed to speak in Jesus' name. Yet when things seemed darkest, some prophet has arisen—an Augustine, a Benedict, a Francis, a Luther, a Wesley—and once again men's hearts have responded to the divine message, and the institution of which men were beginning to despair has taken on a new lease of life.

#### 4. CATHOLICISM AND PROTESTANTISM AS PERSISTENT TYPES OF CHURCHLY CHRISTIANITY

Side by side with the changes which are the result of expanding knowledge and deepening religious insight are other differences which are the result of the persistence, across all changes of intellectual environment and of spiritual maturity, of contrasted types of thought and life. There is not one of all the major schools of historic philosophy but has had its representative among Christian theologians and is represented among them today. There is no one of the familiar human types whose contrast has furnished novelist and dramatist with their most intriguing themes which has not its corresponding representative in the Christian church.

To one who approaches the study of Christian theology for the first time the discovery of these contrasted types is a disturbing experience. He wants

to know what is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. But when he turns to her theologians for an answer he is baffled by the extent and variety of their differences. Abélard has given the classical illustration of this kind of difference in his *Sic et Non*,<sup>4</sup> a book in which he arranges in parallel columns the conflicting opinions of theologians, all of whom were recognized as orthodox in the church of his day.

Efforts have been made from time to time to standardize the teaching of the church by giving official approval to some particular type of philosophy. A striking example is the well-known encyclical of Leo XIII entitled *Æterni Patris*,<sup>5</sup> in which he recommends a revival of the study of St. Thomas Aquinas as the theologian best fitted to serve the needs of the church of the present day. But in spite of papal efforts, the old issues which in the Middle Ages separated Scotists from Thomists still continue, and the seeker who is in quest of an entirely unambiguous answer to his philosophical questions must seek his answer elsewhere than in the Catholic Church.

Similar contrasts meet us in Protestantism. Calvin taught predestination; Arminius was equally emphatic in teaching free will. Lutherans are willing to confine the responsibility of the church to witness in the field of personal religion; Calvinists have magnified its social responsibility as critic and, if need be, as reformer of the state.

<sup>4</sup> Abélard, Peter (1079-1142).

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclical Letter Æterni Patris*, August 4, 1879 (*The Study of Scholastic Philosophy*), in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Leo XIII* (New York, 1903), pp. 48-57.

As the different schools of philosophy find themselves at home in the church, so also the different types of religious experience. The once-born and the twice-born, to use James' familiar classification, are both found among its members; the healthy-minded Christian and the sin-sick soul. There are some Christians whose interest is primarily intellectual; others whose emphasis is chiefly emotional; still others who are predominantly practical. The mystic is a constantly recurring figure, a perennial challenge to men of more sober and objective viewpoint.

Seen from one angle the history of the church is the study of a consistent development in which little by little under the impact of a changing environment the permanent features that together make up the Christian Gospel are being more and more clearly defined. Seen from another angle it is an arena in which contrasted types of thought and life carry on their ceaseless controversy, no one of them being able completely to displace the others.

From the point of view of the historian, Catholicism and Protestantism may be regarded as successive stages in the church's history, and it is his function to show us through what steps they have come to be what they are. But from the point of view of the philosopher they are not successive, but contemporary; competitors on whom we are asked to sit in judgment and between whom we must choose. We are not simply onlookers, surveying the church from without, with the detachment of the scholar, but participants, and we wish to know where, among the

various alternatives with which the existing situation confronts us, our choice should lie:

It becomes all the more important, therefore, that we should have a clear understanding of the nature of the choice that must be made, whether we are to regard it as a choice between two mutually exclusive positions, one true, the other false, or between two different ways of apprehending a divine reality which in its completeness transcends man's ability to grasp.

In the early history of theology the issue was usually conceived in the former way, and this by both parties to the controversy. It was an issue between the true and the false, between the right and the wrong. Where God had revealed his will (and each group was convinced that to them, and to them alone, the guardianship of this revelation had been entrusted) there was no alternative to submission but rebellion; and for rebels, however noble their motives, there was no place in Christ's church.

We are coming to see that such a way of stating the issue unduly simplifies the problem. What we meet in history is not only mutually exclusive positions, of which one is true and the other false, but permanent types of thought and life which express different ways of apprehending the same divine reality, as to which therefore one may honestly differ while remaining within the Christian brotherhood. The problem for the church, therefore, becomes one of comprehension as well as one of exclusion: how wide a range of variation may be included within the

one church? At what points may Christians differ in their thought and in their experience without ceasing to be Christians?

It was this question to which the World Conference recently held at Lausanne directed its attention. That conference, it will be remembered, was called to consider the differences in faith and order which still separate Christians. The themes with which it dealt—the creeds, the ministry, the sacraments—have been the subjects of ecclesiastical controversy during the centuries, and innumerable councils have met to register their views on the questions at issue. But the conference at Lausanne differed from its predecessors in its philosophy. The bishops who met at Nicæa and Chalcedon believed that God had revealed his will on the subjects in dispute in such clear-cut and unmistakable fashion that all who differed from the view officially promulgated by the dominant party in the church were to be deemed heretics, and as such to be banned from its councils. But those who met at Lausanne were more catholic in their view. They did not believe that any one branch or party in the church possessed the whole truth. They were convinced that each branch of the church had received from God some revelation of his truth and that church unity, if it were ever to come, must come by the way of comprehension, not of suppression. They set themselves therefore, in the spirit of fraternity, to explore the differences that separated them, in the hope that through comparison of di-

vergent views they might gain new light upon God's will for his church in our own day.

The results reached more than justified the faith which had prompted the attempt. Differences remained, but their significance had altered. They were seen to be the sincere convictions of men who, because loyal to the truth as God had given them to see it, could be recognized as fellow-Christians for whom it was imperative to find some place in the church. So even though organic unity was not yet possible and at some points the difficulties in the way were even accentuated, the spirit of unity and the motives for the further exploration of a basis of agreement were reinforced.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On the results reached at Lausanne cf. *Faith and Order, Lausanne 1927*, ed., Bate, H. N. (New York, 1927), and *Convictions*, ed., Hodgson, Leonard (New York, 1934). Those who are interested in the classification of religious types will find the subject further discussed in my book, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923).





*PART II*  
*CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY*

CHAPTER VI

THE GENIUS OF CATHOLIC PIETY

1. What It Means to Be a Catholic.
2. Characteristics of Catholic Piety.
3. The Place of the Church in Catholic Piety.
4. The Saints as Objects of Devotion and as Sources of Help.
5. The Religious Orders as Training Schools for Sainthood.

*To understand Catholic Christianity we must not only study its history and come to know the institutional forms through which it finds contemporary expression. We must live ourselves into the genius of the piety of which it is the outgrowth and expression.*

*Among the chief marks of this piety are these. It is sacramental, finding God not only symbolized but actually mediated by physical objects. It is other-worldly, having its focus in a heavenly world unseen by the senses yet readily accessible to those who use the means the church provides. It is mystical, magnifying the contemplative life and giving it precedence over the active life. It is ascetic, exalting the life which is narrowly religious above that which is lived in the world, and having a more exacting standard for those who follow the first from that which it requires of those who are content with the second. It is institutional in that it gives the visible church a central place in the religious life and makes man dependent upon it both for its definition of the ideal and for the help that makes its realization possible. Finally, in its Roman form, in spite of its mystical character, it is legalistic in that the steps through which one enters upon the true life and the standards by which one measures success are the performance of specific acts to which merit (or demerit) attaches and which make man in a very real sense a co-worker with God in achieving his own salvation.*

## 1. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CATHOLIC

We are to study the questions at issue between Protestants and Catholics. But what is a Catholic; and how can he be recognized?

This is by no means a needless question. Shall we say that a Catholic is one who belongs to the Catholic Church? But there is more than one Catholic Church. There is an Orthodox Church, and there is a Roman Church, and there is an Old Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there are no less than twenty independent and self-governing Orthodox churches.<sup>2</sup> These Orthodox churches differ from the Roman Church in definite and recognizable ways. So much do they differ and so seriously do they take their differences that the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics cannot take communion together.

Nor is this all. There are Catholics who are neither Orthodox nor Roman nor Old Catholic but who belong to a church which includes in its official title the word Protestant. One of the striking features of the religious life of the last century has been the emergence and growing strength within the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Churches of a party calling itself Anglo-Catholic.<sup>3</sup> This party claims for

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 27, note.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart, H. L., *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism* (New York, 1929). Cf. Kelly, Herbert H., *Catholicity* (London, 1932).

the entire Anglican Communion the same right to the Catholic name as the members of the Orthodox and Roman churches. If we wish an enlightening answer to our question what is a Catholic, we must find some other test than that which is furnished by membership in a church which is Catholic rather than Protestant.

Shall we say then: A Catholic, to whatever church he belongs, is one who holds to Catholic beliefs and follows Catholic practices; one who in his religious life, in contrast to the Protestant, accepts these beliefs and practices as normative and lives accordingly? But here we find the puzzling fact that in all these respects there are important differences which separate Catholics from one another. Not even in the same branch of the church do all Catholics think alike or act alike, while in each it is possible to discover wide variations in the character of the religious experience.

Clearly then in our effort to find an answer to our question we must follow some other way. We must choose out of the many-sided phenomena with which our study of the different forms of Catholicism confronts us those permanent and outstanding characteristics which, common to them all, differentiate them from other religious types, and especially from that which we know as Protestant.

We must seek these characteristics not so much in the things they say or even, though that brings us closer to the heart of our matter, in the things they do, as in the way they feel. There is an ethos in the religious life which is none the less real be-

cause it cannot be completely expressed in words. There is a quality in the piety of the Catholic which, for all that it has in common, is different from Protestant piety, just as there is a quality in the patriotism of a Frenchman which is different from the patriotism of an American. Our psychologists have been recently reminding us of these subtle but all-important differences. They have been sketching the outlines of a national psychology which is not identical with the psychology of the individuals who make up the nation.<sup>4</sup> So there are religious types which have social as well as individual significance, and among these are the contrasted types we call Protestant and Catholic.<sup>5</sup>

In our effort to describe these contrasted types there is no single and universally recognized standard to which we can appeal. There are to be sure aspects of the religious life which all Catholics would regard as Catholic; but there remains an area in which agreement is incomplete and as we approach this debatable area our likelihood of mistake increases.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> An interesting example of an attempt at such a national psychology is the book by Salvador de Madariaga entitled *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards; An Essay in Comparative Psychology* (New York, 1931). Contributions to such a national psychology have also been made in the writings of E. G. Siegfried and André Maurois.

<sup>5</sup> On the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism cf. O. C. Quick, *Catholic and Protestant Elements in Christianity* (London, 1924). For a fuller discussion cf. the author's book *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923).

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller discussion of these differences cf. Chapter IV, "Where Catholics and Protestants Differ."

Nevertheless the attempt must be made. There is no other way. The difficulty of defining Catholicism is not greater than that which meets us in our attempt to give a meaning to any other abstract term like socialism or nationalism or, for that matter, like Christianity itself. As soon as we abandon purely external standards which tell us little or nothing, we face the necessity of choice between the less and the more important; and we must test our success or failure by the extent to which our definition meets the approval of those whose experience it attempts to characterize and by the extent to which it helps us to understand the significance of the differences we discover.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC PIETY

When the average Protestant encounters Catholic piety he is struck first of all by what seems to him its superstitious character. He sees men and women telling their beads or crossing themselves with holy water as they enter or leave the church. He sees the Orthodox kissing the icons and watches the genuflexions of the Roman priest. He reads the prayers to which indulgences are attached and his thoughts

<sup>7</sup> The definition of types, as Troeltsch long ago pointed out, is a delicate business. It requires more than description, necessary though that may be. There is a critical element involved, as we decide what to put in and what to leave out. There is forecast as we submit our choice to the test of later generations. The critic assumes the rôle of prophet, and only the future can determine whether in fact he shall prove to be the spokesman of the God of truth. Cf. *Wesen des Christentum*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Tübingen, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 386-451.

go back to Tetzels and the Reformation. Or perhaps at a great festival he observes the relic of some saint borne in triumphant procession through the streets, as when the head of St. Catherine of Siena was brought back to her own city. Wherever he goes, he finds bits of the true Cross; and when he reads of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, his incredulity passes into indignation. What good can there be in a religion that tolerates such patent superstition?

Catholics themselves will be the first to admit that there are superstitious elements in the belief and practice of many of their fellow-churchmen which the more enlightened members of the church deprecate and against which they protest. It is well to remember, however, that Catholics have no monopoly of superstition. Protestantism, if judged by its practice, has much of which to be ashamed, and its ministers are constantly holding up before their people ideals not yet attained.

We must be careful however not to let our protest against superstition blind us to the positive truth which the Catholic intends to affirm. In comparing religious types we must compare the best with the best, not our own best with our neighbors' worst. At this point counsels of patience are in place. Before we criticize we must understand; and this takes an effort of the imagination for which most Protestants are unprepared. I suggest therefore that for the moment we lay aside all question of truth or falsehood and, taking Catholic piety at its face value, try



to realize how it seems, or better still how it feels, to our Catholic fellow-worshippers.

The first thing that we note about Catholic piety is the extremely concrete, not to say naïve, way in which it finds expression. It is mediated by physical objects: statues of saints, pictures of the Virgin and of the Christchild, the crucifix, not to speak of a host of lesser objects like the rosary and the scapula<sup>8</sup> which fix the attention of the worshipper and give definiteness to his meditation. There is in each Roman Catholic Church not one altar but many, and each has its relic commemorating the virtues and the sacrifice of some particular saint. In the Orthodox Church the iconostasis, which divides the inner shrine from the body of the church, receives its name from the fact that it is a screen for the display of the pictures of the saints. There are holy actions too, like the elevation of the host or the sign of the Cross. There are holy places, like the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes or the shrines that commemorate episodes in the life of the Savior or of some later saint. Above all there are holy persons, like the priest or the saint. Catholic religion is accessible religion. Through its symbols—and they are everywhere—it brings God near to the worshipper. It reminds him that there is another world than the

<sup>8</sup> The scapula consists essentially of a piece of cloth about the width of the breast from one shoulder to the other (*i.e.*, about fourteen to eighteen inches) and of such a length that it reaches not quite to the feet in front. There are also shorter forms of the scapula. In the middle is the opening for the head. It is usually worn over the habit or soutane. (See *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII (New York, 1912).

world of business and pleasure in which most of our working hours are spent. It invites him to fellowship with the eternal.

✕ Catholic religion, I repeat, is a religion of symbols. But a symbol to a Catholic has a different meaning from that which it has to the average Protestant. To the Protestant a symbol is a sign of something which is not present to sense, something that must be grasped by the imagination or the reason. But to the Catholic it is something in which the thing signified *is* present in a very literal sense. In the symbols of religion the gap between matter and spirit is bridged and God, the Spirit, is actually present to be seen and touched and tasted.<sup>9</sup> This is the meaning of the doctrine of transubstantiation which is such a stumbling block to Protestant thinking. It is the presupposition of the sanctity that attaches to the office of the priest and which gives his acts supernatural quality, whatever may be the failings and foibles of his personal character.

This intimate connection between the spiritual and the physical explains the reverence shown by Roman Catholics for the relics of the saints and the central place given to the icons in Orthodox devotion. It is the way in which they explain their faith in the fact that God uses sense as the channel of his communication to spirit. To Catholic piety, in spite of all its asceticism, nature is God's handiwork, and body no

<sup>9</sup> The Orthodox Church defines the real presence by saying that the symbol is the means through which the inherent connection between the heavenly and earthly worlds is made evident to the eye of faith.

less than spirit may be the medium of his revelation.

But the natural world in which we are living today is only half of God's universe. There is another world, unseen, but no less real, to which it is God's purpose to introduce us. And it is the main purpose of Catholic piety to show us how the transition is to be made.

A second outstanding characteristic of Catholic piety, therefore, is its vivid sense of the presence and nearness of the supernatural. The Catholic lives at the same time in two worlds: this familiar world of space and time, of persons and things, in which all of us exist, but at the same time in another world, no less real, no less accessible, no less substantial, to which the sacraments of religion introduce him. It is the heavenly world in which God has his home, and the angels, and the saints. And this world, unseen though it be, is everywhere present. To the believing Catholic, Francis Thompson's familiar lines are not poetry, but sober fact:

"The angels keep their ancient places—  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,  
That miss the many-splendored thing." <sup>10</sup>

This heavenly world is an eternal world. It was there long before man came upon the scene. It will continue long after the physical universe has ceased to be. And in this unseen world, outlasting death, Jesus is living, and the saints who with him enjoy

<sup>10</sup> "The Kingdom of God."

immortality. Nothing impresses the ordinary Protestant more than the vivid sense possessed by the practising Catholic of the continuity of life and of the possibility of our continued fellowship with those who have died. He not only believes in the communion of saints; he practises it. Of the two worlds into which the veil we call death divides our universe, that in which we are now living seems to him the least important. It is only a stage in his journey toward a better. And he believes that he realizes God's will most clearly and fulfils it most perfectly in the measure that he detaches himself from this present world and becomes partaker, even here and now, of the life that is eternal.

Yet the heavenly world is not wholly different from the world in which we are living today. It is the same world, only transfigured into something infinitely better—a world in which all that we now desire is achieved and all which we most highly value is realized. There is to be a new Jerusalem with streets of gold and gates of pearl; but we shall find milk and honey in the new city, old familiar occupations, and old familiar joys; only life there will be free from the alloy of frustration and disappointment.

The way one enters this unseen world and is enabled even here and now to participate in its experiences is by prayer. And by prayer the Catholic means not petition simply, but adoration. To be pious in the Catholic sense one must fix one's attention upon God and hold it there. There is good psychology in this. All great insights, whether in

art or in science, come through concentration of attention upon the object to be appropriated. But in this case a definite discipline is proposed which aims at detachment from ordinary human interests. Worship is, to the Catholic, man's chief business. And worship as he understands it requires a surrender so complete that the human is not simply subordinated to the divine but is finally identified with it and God becomes literally, all in all. The well-known sentence of Irenæus about the incarnation: "He became what we are that he might make us what he is,"<sup>11</sup> sets the tone for all later Catholic piety. The typical Catholic is a mystic and realizes his ideal of perfection most naturally and easily through the contemplative life. The human ego, to be sure, is never completely suppressed, but union with God is approximated in the measure that everything which is distinctive of the individual is surrendered.

\* It is not easy to achieve this complete detachment. Indeed it is so difficult that for the majority of Christians it is impossible. Hence God, who knows the limitations of his creatures, has provided an easier way. The ideal remains the same for all, but the time and the manner of its realization are different. Some achieve sainthood in this life; for others a time of purgation after death is necessary. But even here those who are least advanced in the Christian life may receive help from those who are more mature. By their sacrifices the saints acquire merit

<sup>11</sup> *Adv. Hær.*, bk. I, Preface (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 526).

which becomes available for others; by their intercession they bring us help in time of need.<sup>12</sup>

For the Catholic then there is not one way of life but two: that of the religious and that of the ordinary Christian. The religious (the priest and monk) accepts a rule of life more severe than that laid upon others. He renounces marriage.<sup>13</sup> He owns no property. He surrenders his will to that of his superior in order that in the performance of the task allotted to him, whether of contemplation or of action, he may give himself with undivided mind to the worship and the service of God. The ordinary Christian on the other hand lives his life in the world. He may marry and own property and, within limits, regulate his own affairs. But these liberties the church regards as concessions to the weakness of the flesh. Virginity is higher than marriage and poverty than wealth. Characteristic of Catholic piety in all its forms is the exaltation of the monastic ideal.

But how can one know whether the mystical way is the right way; and who is to tell those who do not adopt the monastic rule what they ought to do? Here the answer of the Catholic is clear and definite. God has provided in the church an authoritative exponent of his will and those who submit themselves to its teaching will receive a trustworthy and suffi-

<sup>12</sup> This at least is the Roman view. Orthodoxy has no doctrine of purgatory, and rejects the idea of supererogatory merit.

<sup>13</sup> At this point the ideals of Orthodox and Roman Catholic diverge. The Orthodox require celibacy only of the bishop, the ordinary priest being married, while Rome, with a few exceptions (The Uniat Rite) requires celibacy of all its clergy. Both Orthodoxy and Rome make celibacy a mark of the monastic life.

cient answer to all their questions. More than this, they will receive the help they need when they have gone wrong and the reinforcement they require when they are trying to do right. Determinative for all forms of Catholicism is not only the central place which it gives to the church as the revealer of God's will and the mediator of his grace but the identification of this church with a particular visible organization, recognizable by definite marks and possessed of a priesthood endowed with the needed power for the fulfilment of its divinely appointed function.

Different branches of the Catholic Church differ in their view of the exact nature and limits of the church's organization, of the way in which its authority is exercised, of the relation of priesthood to laity, and of the respective right of each in the government of the church. That there is a visible church with a responsible priesthood and that it has an indispensable function in the mediation of God's grace, all Catholics agree.

Among the means through which God imparts the knowledge of his will, all Catholics give an important place to tradition. Like Protestants, they regard the Bible as the primary source of revelation. But they hold that the Bible apart from the church cannot be rightly understood and they find the church's understanding of the Bible recorded and preserved by tradition. The Orthodox and the Anglo-Catholics understand by tradition the teaching of the undivided church of the first eight centuries. Rome affirms a continuing tradition of which it is the custodian;

but all agree that tradition holds an indispensable place beside the Bible and one equally authoritative with it.<sup>14</sup>

The help which the church thus brings to man in his effort to remedy the consequences of his sin and to achieve the good life is mediated in various ways, but it centres in a series of physical acts in which the divine grace is not only symbolized but through which it is imparted.<sup>15</sup> These mediatorial acts, seven in number, are known as sacraments. The most important of the sacraments and the one in which Catholic worship culminates is the Eucharist or Mass, in which the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is re-presented and his real presence received in the form of bread and wine. Other sacraments, like baptism and confirmation, admit the believer to the visible church and prepare him to be partaker of its mysteries. In penance he confesses his sin and receives absolution, while extreme unction takes the place of penance when approaching death makes the performance of voluntary penance impossible.<sup>16</sup> Through ordination the priest is set apart for his priestly office. In marriage God consecrates the life

<sup>14</sup> The Orthodox, to be sure, admit in principle a continuing tradition, though the fact that for a millennium no general synod has met makes the determination of its present content difficult. Rome, on the other hand, has provided in the papacy an organ through which the present teaching of the church can be authoritatively determined, and in the exercise of this power has defined as of faith doctrines (*e.g.*, the infallibility of the Pope) which Orthodoxy rejects.

<sup>15</sup> They have, therefore, to the faith of the Catholic not simply physical, but metaphysical, significance.

<sup>16</sup> This is a departure from the earlier usage, where the primary purpose of unction was restoration to health.



of sex. To all the sacraments God imparts a divine efficacy independent of the moral character of the human ministrant.

All the specific sacraments gain their significance from their relation to the central mystery of the incarnation. They are the way in which the truth of God's presence as Spirit in and through nature is made effective in the life of the individual. In the sacraments we meet the present supernatural.

This view of sacramental grace explains the unique position of the priesthood in Catholic religion. A priest is a person who by his ordination has received the power to communicate God's grace through the sacraments as no other Christian not similarly endowed can do. This power is imparted by the laying on of the hands of the bishop, who in his turn stands in the order of apostolic succession.

It is this conception of the priesthood which explains the attitude of the Catholic to intercommunion. Whether he be Orthodox, Roman, or Anglican, there is something needed for the full efficacy of the sacraments which he misses in the Protestant ministry.

Though salvation is thus of God and works *ex opere operato*, man has his part to play. God's gifts are there for all; but that they may become efficacious, each must appropriate them for himself. God, who has made man free, expects him to use his freedom; and according to the way he uses it, will visit him with reward or punishment.

In Roman Catholic piety the conception of merit

holds an important place. It is the foundation stone of the divine government which, while loving, is also just. Christ himself is the great example, who through his sinless life and sacrificial death has merited salvation for the whole human race yet who invites those who would follow him to be partakers in his redemptive work. The saints, our great examples of self-sacrifice, have, by their self-abnegation graciously blessed by God, acquired supererogatory merit which by the same grace is made accessible to those who are penitent and perform good works.<sup>17</sup>

It is only against the background of this conception that we can understand the place which the *ex opere operato*<sup>18</sup> theory holds in Catholic piety. It is not, as many Protestants believe, the doctrine that God by magic works in the object affected a change which gives it saving efficacy apart from the spiritual attitude of the participant. It is the assurance to the worshipper who comes to the sacrament in faith that, if he do his part, God has already done his. There is no third factor to be taken into account, no imperfection in the human mediator to be supplied. All that is needed is the right attitude of the will on the recipient's part and the result is assured.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Here again we find differences of emphasis. Highly as the Orthodox esteem the saint and large as is the place which he holds in Orthodox piety, Orthodox theology has not followed Rome in the development of a doctrine of supererogatory merit.

<sup>18</sup> I.e., the theory that the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon its having been performed in the manner prescribed by God, not in any sense upon the moral character and intelligence of the officiating priest.

<sup>19</sup> A similar logic underlies the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. Here we have in the Atonement a case of *ex opere operato*. Only in this case the action that is necessary for the ap-

These then are the chief marks by which Catholic piety is to be recognized. It is sacramental, finding God not only symbolized but actually mediated by physical objects. It is other-worldly, having its focus in a heavenly world unseen by the senses yet readily accessible to those who use the means the church provides. It is mystical, magnifying the contemplative life and giving it precedence over the active life. It is ascetic, exalting the life which is narrowly religious above that which is lived in the world and, having a more exacting standard for those who follow the first than that which it requires of those who are content with the second. It is institutional in that it gives the visible church a central place in the religious life and makes man dependent upon it both for the definition of the ideal and for the help that makes its realization possible. Finally, in its Roman form, in spite of its mystical character, it is legalistic in that the steps through which one enters upon the true life and the standards by which one measures success are the performance of specific acts to which merit (or demerit) attaches and which make man in a very real sense a co-worker with God in achieving his own salvation.

It is not meant that all these characteristics are present in all forms of Catholicism or that each branch of the church understands them in the same way; but it is meant that if we seek for differentiat-

propriation of the merits of Christ's sacrifice is, as many Protestants believe, beyond the power of the unaided human will and is made possible only through the immediate action of God's Spirit in regeneration.

ing marks by which to recognize the Catholic type of piety, these six will furnish us with the guide-posts we need. Whether he be Orthodox or Roman or Anglican, the Catholic is one who takes the symbols of religion realistically, whose religious life is centered in the eternal world that knows no death, whose piety is of the mystic order, yet who recognizes two different ways of serving God—that which is religious in the technical sense and that which is secular—and who gives precedence to the former. He is one who submits in all things that concern his salvation to the guidance of the visible church, in whose tradition he finds God's original revelation continued, in whose priests he recognizes God's authorized spokesmen, and in whose sacraments he acknowledges God's appointed means of grace. He is a man, finally, who believes that through his church God is summoning him to a life of discipline in which his will has an essential part to play, and who sees in the lives of the saints models of that life of complete devotion through which alone the justice of God can be satisfied and the holiness acquired without which no man can see the Lord.

### 3. THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN CATHOLIC PIETY

What has thus far been said will suffice to give a general outline of Catholic piety; but to sharpen the lines and give definiteness to the contour a few words may be added upon three points in which Catholic piety differs most widely from that of the ordinary

Protestant: (1) the greater importance attached to the services of the church, (2) the important place given to the saints as objects of devotion and as sources of help, and (3) the high value placed upon the monastic life.

It follows from the nature of the church as God's appointed spokesman and representative that it must occupy a central place in Catholic piety. And by the church is meant the visible church with its buildings, its priesthood, and its services. "I do not understand you Protestants," once said a thoughtful American Catholic to the writer. "You make your churchgoing depend upon whether you like your minister or not. But for me it is not an open question whether I shall go to church. My church has settled that for me. It tells me that it is my duty to attend mass every Sunday." For the Catholic, whether he be Greek, or Roman, or Anglican, the mass is the centre of divine worship. It is the place where one meets God most directly and receives his grace most certainly.

The Catholic therefore multiplies the services of the church and puts the mass at the hour when it is most convenient for the worshipper. And when the hour for mass has passed and the priest is elsewhere occupied, there is always the church building to which the worshipper may go, the altar before which he may pray, the tabernacle in which the sacred host is enshrined, the pictures and the statues that recall the lives of the saints, the relics that make them even physically present.

The church building acquires for the Catholic a significance quite different from that which it has for the Protestant. It is not a place to which he goes once or twice a week for his public worship. It is a part of his daily life, the spot where he can keep daily tryst with God.<sup>20</sup>

It is not only in the church in the narrow sense that he meets the present supernatural. About this centre, as we have seen, there cluster a host of objects and activities upon all of which the church has conferred specifically religious character. To describe them would require not a volume, but many volumes, and would introduce us into practices of almost infinite variety. Some, like the stations of the Cross, recall to memory the experience of the Savior in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Others, like the wayside crucifix, are designed to remind the traveller of the longer journey on which he has embarked. Still others, like the rosary, are designed to recall the church's teaching about prayer and provide him with helps for its practice. But all have this in common, that they present the supernatural in familiar and accessible form. They are ways in which the church extends its influence and universalizes its presence.

Catholic theologians have their explanations which rationalize what is done and safeguard the church's teaching from superstitious admixture. They distinguish the sacramentals which are permitted from

<sup>20</sup> This is especially true of the Roman Church. In Orthodox countries the use of the church building is more largely confined to Sundays and saints' days.

the sacraments which are required. But such distinctions are beyond our present scope. Our interest is in the piety of the Catholic, not in his theology.

As we study this piety we realize how great may be the gap between official teaching and popular practice. In Catholic theory the supernatural stands over against nature, as a reality wholly different in kind. In practice nature and the supernatural touch at every point and form parts of one undivided world. Nature to the devout Catholic is the handiwork of God and the beauties it reveals and the uses it serves are gifts to be received at his hand. They are not different in kind from the gifts which God will give his redeemed when they enter the heavenly city. They are earnest, foretastes, prophecies of the life to come.

In all these ways the Catholic makes religion easy for simple people. His piety is comprehensive, touching life on all its sides. It is adequate, meeting man's every need. When one watches the devout Catholic at his worship, one sees that he is doing something which he enjoys. His religion is one which gives him happiness.

#### 4. THE SAINTS AS OBJECTS OF DEVOTION AND AS SOURCES OF HELP

We may illustrate the seriousness with which the Catholic views his relation to the unseen world by the attitude which the worshipper takes to the saints. There is no point which presents a greater obstacle

to the Protestant, none which it is more essential to understand, if we wish to penetrate to the essence of Catholic piety.

It is possible to exaggerate the importance of the place given to the saints by Catholics. There are many instances of Catholic devotion where the saints do not appear at all, prayers which the Protestant can make his own without the change of a word.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless it is true that in the life of the Catholic the saints play an indispensable rôle and it is important for us to understand what this is.

For one thing the saints furnish the Catholic believer with examples of adventurous religion. They are his heroes and heroines, and their lives of dauntless struggles and measureless sacrifice have for Catholics, young and old, a perennial interest. In them he sees the virtues he admires carried to heroic heights and the story of the obstacles that they overcame and the way they won their victory never loses its appeal.

Even those aspects of the saintly life which are repellent to most Protestants, such as its extreme asceticism, its deliberate renunciation of the life of sex, have their contribution to make to this appeal. Baron von Hügel, who, in his published works,<sup>22</sup> repeatedly pays tribute to the Abbé Huvelin as the man to whom, under God, he owes most, tells us that the Abbé gained his power over him not least by the proof of absolute self-mastery which he had given by

<sup>21</sup> This is especially true of the official worship of the church.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, Second Series (London, 1926), p. 96.



his voluntary renunciation of the married state.<sup>23</sup>

It is not human virtues only which the Catholic admires in the saints. Their lives exhibit qualities which he has been taught to believe are characteristically divine. When he reads the life story of St. Francis, he understands what is meant by the love of God; and the stigmata make vivid to his imagination the sacrifice consummated for us on Calvary. Dearest of all and nearest is she whom every Catholic honors as the Virgin Mother of his Lord and to whom every day, and often many times each day, he addresses the prayer which is surpassed in sacredness only by The Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria.

Henry Adams, in his book *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*,<sup>24</sup> a book which for a Protestant reveals an unusual insight into the genius of Catholic piety, has given an account of the rôle which the Virgin played in the religious life of the Middle Ages. He shows how the motherly graces attributed to her mitigated the cruelty of contemporary standards and won for her a deathless place in the affections of the faithful. Later generations have but carried the process further till, in spite of all the distinctions of the theologians, Mary holds a place in the heavenly hierarchy scarcely less exalted than that of Christ himself. On the wall of the great Apse of St. Peter's in Rome is printed the decree which registered the definition of her immaculate conception, and there are many who believe that in the not too distant future another

<sup>23</sup> *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 1 (London, 1921), p. 286.

<sup>24</sup> (New York, 1913.)

dogma will be added—that which affirms the assumption of the Virgin to that heavenly throne where she sits beside her Son in the presence of God, the Father.<sup>25</sup>

One can gain some conception of the place which the Virgin holds in Catholic piety from a recent poem by a German Catholic priest, Johannes Hessen:

“Eternal Father!

In wondrous wise hast thou the world created.  
 Thy stars shine, thy flowers bloom  
 In beauty and glory.  
 But greater are thy miracles  
 In the realm of grace.  
 Wonder-flowers bloom in thy garden.  
 But the most beautiful of them all is the mystic rose:  
 The Virgin Mother Mary.  
 Virgin is she, pure as the snow,  
 Shining as the stars, fresh as the spring,  
 Pure as the dew.  
 Virgin is she and mother at once.  
 Thy dearest child she bore upon her heart,  
 Gave him the light of life.

O let my soul be both  
 Virgin and Mother.  
 Pure as the Virgin,  
 Fertile as the Mother.  
 Banish everything that is base from my heart.  
 Grant me high thoughts  
 And a pure heart.  
 Fill me with thy Spirit, thy power.  
 May thy Son be born again in my soul.  
 Let me too become God-bearer,

<sup>25</sup> Here again we may distinguish between Roman and Orthodox piety, Roman Catholic practice having carried devotion to the Virgin to a point not reached in Orthodox piety.

God-messenger to my brothers and sisters,  
 So that thy Son may be born in them too  
 And thy Kingdom established. Amen." <sup>26</sup>

The words of the Ave Maria suggest another function which the saints fulfil in the lives of the faithful. They follow the fortunes of their less fortunate fellow-mortals on earth and by their intercession bring them help in their necessity. This help takes very direct and practical forms: healing in sickness, comfort in trouble, enlightenment in darkness. Indeed one of the marks of the true saint, so far at least as the Church of Rome is concerned, is that it can be proved that after death he, or she, has performed at least three miracles; while to the greater saints, and to Mary most of all, the working of miracles is frequently attributed. Enter a Catholic church, like the Mariners' Church of Notre Dame at Marseilles, and you will see on the walls many little placards each expressing the thanks of some worshipper for a prayer answered, a life spared, or a sickness healed.

But the saints are not only, or chiefly, helpers to whom one turns for the assistance needed for today. In them the Catholic sees his model for the perfect life. He may not himself have chosen the religious life. He may be conscious of sins from which the true saint is free. In his heart of hearts he feels that theirs is the kind of life he ought to live and, even while he is still living in the world, it is to the saint that he will turn for the ideal which inspires his every upward step. The religious orders exist to make the

<sup>26</sup> Hessen, Johannes, *Unser Vater* (Rottenburg, 1929), p. 33. The translation is the author's.

achievement of sainthood more possible; and when life's failures have brought their disillusionment and the world of pleasure or of gain has lost its charm, their doors are always open, giving a hospitable welcome to those who, turning from man and man's concerns, desire to worship God for himself alone.

#### 5. THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS AS TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR SAINTHOOD

With the mention of the religious orders we reach the third point at which Catholic piety presents difficulty for the Protestant—its acceptance of the double standard. It is important therefore that we should understand just what this acceptance means and what is the relation of the religious orders to the life which ordinary Christians are living in the world.

A religious order, as the Catholic understands it, is a company of men or of women living under a definite rule who have abandoned certain of the privileges open to other people in order to give themselves with undivided attention to the cultivation of the religious life. They are the schools in which saints are trained.

Yet sainthood is possible outside the monastic life. There have been saints who were married as well as saints who were single, saints who were rich as well as saints who were poor, saints who were kings as well as saints who were subjects. On the church's calendar of saints' days we find the names of a pope like Gregory the Great, of a monarch like St. Louis of France, of a wife like St. Catherine of Genoa, of

a soldier like Joan of Arc. Nevertheless it is true that on the whole it is the orders in which the greater number of the saints have received their training and in which they have found that it was most possible for them to realize the holy life.

They have found there, in the first place, the conditions under which they could follow with the least distraction their quest of individual perfection. Protestants commonly think of the monastic rule as a limitation of freedom. It is not so that it appears to those who are living under it. Some things are given up to be sure, but only in order to gain wider scope for others. No longer need the monk fear that life's many-sided distractions will rob him of his hours of quiet. No longer need his anxious thought for the morrow invade the night which should be free for communion with his God. If life's luxuries have been surrendered, its basic wants will be supplied. Food may be simple, but what he needs he will have, and all the energy that went to the life of business or of pleasure is free for use in the worship of God.

We must not think that in this concentration upon the inner life the monk is purely selfish, for it belongs to Catholic piety to believe that there is no more effective way of serving others than by prayer. It was in the solitude of the Garden that Christ did most for the disciples who had forsaken him. It was when he hung on the Cross that he made atonement for the sins of mankind.

So the sacrifices which fill so large a place in the story of the saints were not futile or needless. They

furnish the discipline by means of which the soldier is fitted for his task. They provide the schooling by which the pupil is taught to practise the imitation of Christ.

The uses for which the monastic discipline sets those who accept it free vary widely. For some the contemplative life engrosses all available energy. This is true notably of Orthodox piety. It is true also of some Roman orders, such, for example, as the Carmelites. But prayer is not the only use to which the religious may devote his hours of leisure. For every form of helpful service the monk and the nun are set free. Are there books to be written or pictures to be painted; the Order of St. Benedict can provide an outlet for the talent of the scholar and the artist. Are there sick to be nursed or orphans to be mothered; the sisterhoods will send ministers to hospital and orphanage. Are there heathen to be converted or worldly communities to be aroused; St. Dominic can give you the preachers, and St. Ignatius Loyola can supply the missionaries. Are laymen to be trained for the ministry of love and instructed in its social duties; it is to the Paulists that you must go for workers and for counsellors. Is there need of thorough thinking about fundamental social problems; the Society of Jesus can furnish the scholars that are needed and set them free for their intensive work.

In the crypt of the old Carmelite Convent in Paris, now the home of the Catholic Institute, there are two objects which are of special interest to successive

generations of students. One is the high wooden cross which Père Lacordaire used in his ascetic discipline;<sup>27</sup> the other is the tomb of Father Ozanam, the founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.<sup>28</sup> Lacordaire was one of the greatest preachers in an age of great preachers and was especially famous for his sermons on the passion of our Lord. In his preparation for these sermons he made use of the cross, hanging suspended upon it for hours at a time that he might learn in his own person how it felt to be crucified and become able to interpret to others the sufferings of Christ. Father Ozanam on the other hand was practical in his aims and objective in his attitude. It was his one purpose in life to mobilize the unused resources of the Catholic laity for the work of ministering to the needy and the suffering. In honor of St. Vincent de Paul he organized the great society which now has its ramifications in every land and which everywhere is rendering a beneficent service.

In these two personalities we have typified two contrasted types of Catholic piety: the contemplative and the active. The former has had its chief development in Eastern Catholicism, the latter in the Catholicism of the West.

<sup>27</sup> Lacordaire, Jean-Baptiste-Henri-Dominique, a French abbé who lived from 1802 to 1861.

<sup>28</sup> Ozanam, Antoine-Frédéric, who lived from 1813 to 1853.

*PART II (CONTINUED)*

*CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY*

CHAPTER VII

WHAT ROME OFFERS AND WHAT SHE DEMANDS

1. The Roman Church in Its Ideal and in History.
2. The Church as Mediator Between God and Man.
3. The Church as Regulator of Belief.
4. The Church as Director of Conscience.
5. The Church as Confraternity of Service.
6. How the Intelligent Roman Catholic Justifies His Submission.



*Roman Catholicism differs from other forms of Catholicism partly in its exclusive and uncompromising character, partly in the extent to which it identifies the church with a single legal institution. This institution has its centre at Rome, its head in the Pope, and its agency of control in a world-wide organization touching life at every point and functioning through many thousands and hundreds of thousands of men and women who, freed from all family ties by the acceptance of the celibate life, can be used by the church for its missionary work. Rome shares with the Orthodox the acceptance of the seven ecumenical councils, of the seven sacraments, of the priestly view of the ministry, and of the division between the secular and the religious life. It differs from Orthodoxy in the central place which it gives to the Pope and in the extent to which it employs legal categories in its doctrine of supererogatory merit. No other church has attempted over so long a period and in such detail to exercise control over the details of Christian life and faith.*

*Roman Catholics justify the acceptance of this claim, so perplexing to Protestants, by the fact that the majority of mankind not only needs authority but desires it; by the distinction between the disciplinary authority of the church, which is provisional only and may change as circumstances alter, and its doctrinal authority, which is exercised rarely; but above all by the fact that there is no higher form of the exercise of freedom than its voluntary surrender to a greater good. Such greater good they believe the Catholic Church in its Roman form to be.*

## 1. THE ROMAN CHURCH IN ITS IDEAL AND IN HISTORY<sup>1</sup>

From this general description of Catholic piety we turn to a consideration of the differences which separate Catholics from one another. And here the outstanding difference is between those Catholics who recognize the primacy of Rome and all others. Indeed so large is the place held by Rome in the Catholic world that for many Protestants the two are identical. Who says Catholic says Roman. The spacious world inhabited by the Orthodox, the elaborate ritual of its service, and the ethereal beauty of its music; the mystic devotion of the Russian monk, and the simple piety of the Serbian peasant: these are all to most of us an unknown country.

But wherever we turn we meet Rome. Here at least is a church which not only in the extent of its claim but in the ubiquity of its presence deserves the name Catholic. Wherever the Protestant erects his church, he finds a Roman church across the way. Into whatever distant land the Protestant missionary may penetrate, he finds a Roman priest carrying on his work by his side.

The difficulty that he feels whenever he touches Catholic piety he experiences with the Roman form

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this chapter is taken, with the permission of the publishers, from my former book, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923), which is now out of print.

of it in intensive degree. For here he is dealing with a church with a long history that numbers among its ministers scholars of the first rank. Superstitions that might be pardoned in simple people become intolerable when imposed upon a cultivated modernist by men who have had university training. Most of all the Protestant is repelled by the Roman claim to universal dominion. Imperialism in the state he can understand, even if as a good democrat he may feel constrained to resist it; but imperialism in religion seems to him a contradiction in terms. And Rome is above all things an example of imperialism in religion.

It is no doubt true that we cannot without qualification identify Roman Catholicism with imperialism. The Church of Rome is a majestic edifice which has been long in building. Many different kinds of material have gone into its making. The influence of primitive Christianity is found side by side with Greek philosophy; the mystical sacramentalism of the Eastern cults, with the legalism of Rome and of the Germanic invaders. The asceticism of the hermit and the rapture of the saint have made their contribution, but also the acute intelligence of the schoolman and the *savoir faire* of the man of the world. Many different kinds of temperament have found shelter under the Roman roof and find shelter there today; and among them, as we shall see later, are men whose sympathies are democratic, not to say individualistic. But whatever else the Roman Church may be, it is most distinctively an imperialistic

church, showing the characteristics and appealing to the motives which characterize imperialism everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

When we say that the Roman Church is an imperialistic church we mean two things. We mean, in the first place, that it claims final authority in the field of religion. We mean, in the second place, that this authority is world-wide in its range, extending not only to all men but to all parts of the life of man. There is no individual of all earth's teeming millions to whom the Church of Rome is not conscious of a God-given mission. There is no phase of man's many-sided activity—intellectual, emotional, practical—on which it is not conscious of having an authoritative word to say.

It is all the more important therefore that we should remember the caution with which we began our study of Catholic piety and for the moment forgetting our prejudices, however justifiable they may seem to us to be, try to live ourselves into the world of our Roman Catholic fellow-Christians and see the great church to which they belong with their eyes.

## 2. THE CHURCH AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Many centuries ago a remarkable meeting took place at Canossa.<sup>3</sup> It was an interview between an emperor and a pope. The emperor was the most

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Brown, W. Adams, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923), pp. 27 seq.

<sup>3</sup> January 25-27, 1077.

notable prince in Europe—a potentate who held a position of unexampled dignity and power. But he came to Canossa as a suppliant in penitential garb to prostrate himself before a minister of religion and beg his forgiveness and absolution. It was not force of arms alone which brought him there, but some intangible power of the Spirit. To understand the genius of Roman religion we must study this power, and learn what it meant both to him who exercised it and to him upon whom it was exercised.

It meets us first of all in the claim of the church to be the authentic spokesman for God. In contrast to other forms of Catholicism, that of Rome is exclusive. It professes to be the only true mediator between a man and his God. To the fisherman of Galilee, so Romanists believe, Christ committed the responsibility for the leadership of his church, a responsibility transmitted to his successors in unbroken sequence. To the Roman Catholic to be a Christian means to recognize the primacy of Peter and to act accordingly.

The nature of this primacy and the means through which it is exercised have been progressively defined in the course of history. The definition was completed by the Vatican Council in 1870 through the adoption of the dogma of papal infallibility, or in other words the dogma that when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, that is as the head of an ecumenical council called for the purpose of deciding a point of faith, or morals, he speaks infallibly. Hence Rome can recognize no equal and will tolerate no rival. It

and it alone knows who and what God is and can point out the acceptable way of worshipping him.

Roman Catholics do not deny that even apart from the church, man can attain some knowledge of God. The church teaches that there is something in the Deity which is akin to man, and hence can be apprehended by reason. This side of God's being is revealed in the orderly processes of nature, and may be defined in terms which have their analogies in our own experience, terms like wisdom, goodness, righteousness, justice. But this knowledge, owing to our sinfulness and ignorance, is imperfect—and even if complete would be insufficient for salvation. The church accepts this natural revelation, endorses and purifies it, but its peculiar function is to tell us something additional about God. It is custodian of a supernatural revelation which is wholly unattainable apart from its aid.

This higher and supernatural revelation the church has formulated in certain dogmas such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement. These dogmas contain mysteries which neither human language can describe, nor human thought conceive. Yet in order to be saved, the believer must accept them as true in the form in which the church presents them. Some Catholic theologians have maintained that after these doctrines have been accepted in simple faith, reason may find a meaning in them. Some saints have been persuaded that in the mystical experience this inner meaning has been revealed to them. But most devout Catholics have been convinced that they re-

main mysteries after revelation as before. They are to be believed as a part of the single act of faith by which a Catholic accepts the voice of the church as the voice of God.<sup>4</sup> The one sin which for the Catholic admits of no forgiveness is unbelief, and unbelief means unwillingness to accept at its full value and in the sense that the church intends, whatever its authorized representatives may teach.

Newman's testimony on this point is illuminating. It occurs in the passage in the *Apologia*, in which he describes his mental attitude after he had made the act of submission:

"People say that the doctrine of transubstantiation is difficult to believe; I did not believe the doctrine till I was a Catholic. I had no difficulty in believing it as soon as I believed that the Catholic Roman Church was the oracle of God, and that she had declared this doctrine to be part of the original revelation. It is difficult, impossible, to imagine, I grant;—but how is it difficult to believe? Yet Macaulay thought it so difficult to believe, that he had need of a believer in it of talents as eminent as Sir Thomas More, before he could bring himself to conceive that the Catholics of an enlightened age could resist 'the overwhelming force of the argument against it.' 'Sir Thomas More,' he says, 'is one of the choice specimens of wisdom and virtue; and the doctrine of transubstantiation is a kind of proof charge. A faith which stands that test, will stand any test.' But for myself, I cannot indeed prove it, I cannot tell how it is; but I say, 'Why should it not be? What's to hinder it? What do I know of substance or matter? just as much as the greatest

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<sup>4</sup> The difference between the two attitudes may be represented by the two contrasted formulæ, *Credo ut intelligam* and *Credo quia impossibile est*, which may be rendered respectively: "I make the act of submission, because that is the condition of understanding"; "I make the act of submission, because it is of the very nature of faith to accept that which to the natural reason is incredible."

philosophers, and that is nothing at all. So much is this the case'—Newman goes on—'that there is a rising school of philosophy now, which considers phenomena to constitute the whole of our knowledge in physics. The Catholic doctrine leaves phenomena alone. It does not say that the phenomena go; on the contrary, it says that they remain; nor does it say that the same phenomena are in several places at once. It deals with what no one on earth knows anything about, the material substances themselves. And, in like manner, of that majestic Article of the Anglican as well as of the Catholic creed,—the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. What do I know of the Essence of the Divine Being? I know that my abstract idea of three is simply incompatible with my idea of one; but when I come to the question of concrete fact I have no means of proving that there is not a sense in which one and three can equally be predicated of the Incommunicable God.' " 5

In these words scepticism is raised to the dignity of a religious virtue.

It may well be asked, How does this help us? What will it profit us to possess the revelation of the transcendent God, if even after the church has put us in possession of it, it conveys to our mind no definite and intelligible meaning? The Catholic answers that God has other ways of imparting himself than through the mind. He is a God of action; and that action has taken the form of a series of redemptive deeds which have for their purpose man's salvation. These deeds are in their own nature unintelligible. They are miracles, and as such unpredictable. But these miracles are not isolated and unrelated phenomena. They have succeeded one another in a regular historic succession, and culminated in the creation of an institution which makes possible the con-

<sup>5</sup> *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (London, 1890), pp. 239 *seq.*



tact with God which the soul craves. This contact is mediated through a series of miraculous acts called sacraments. In the sacrament the divine grace lays hold of man and transforms him from a child of nature into a being truly supernatural. The centre of these miraculous redemptive acts is the Mass, and all the other sacraments are to be understood either as preparations for it, or as a means of carrying further forward the divine work which it has begun. In the Mass the transcendent miracle of transubstantiation takes place—a miracle through which the believer is enabled to feed upon the very body and blood of his Savior; and what is more wonderful still, the divine sacrifice on Calvary is re-presented in bloodless form, and so new merit is created which becomes available for the needs of new generations of sinners.

Clearly, then, nothing is more important to the devout Catholic than faithful attendance upon this central rite of his religion. Here in a very true and literal way he meets God face to face. Here in his own personal life he experiences miracle. "I felt instinctively," once said Tyrrell in an illuminating passage which describes an experience of his pre-Catholic days, "what I, long afterwards, understood clearly, namely: that the difference between an altar and a communion table, was infinite."<sup>6</sup>

About this central act of the Catholic worship, as we have seen, there gather a multitude of lesser acts

<sup>6</sup> Petre, M. D., *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 98.

recognized by the church and carried on with its approval. That only is true worship in the sense in which the devout Catholic understands that term, which the church has endorsed and which it can control.

### 3. THE CHURCH AS REGULATOR OF BELIEF

Such being the God whom the Catholic worships, and such the manner in which his worship is performed, we must next ask how the believer is prepared to worship acceptably. This leads us to consider the function of the church as a teacher of religion—a function scarcely less important than that of worship itself.

So far as theory is concerned, the position of Rome is simple. The *ecclesia docens* claims all education for its field. It makes itself responsible for what its members think all along the line. They are allowed to read only what it prescribes. They are expected to study only where it permits. There is no phase of human experience, no department of human research to which in theory at least this principle does not apply. Every phase of contemporary activity, whether it be economic, political, or social, falls within the purview of the church. The encyclicals of the popes would furnish material for the reconstruction of contemporary history, and the papal syllabus of errors would serve as a convenient introduction to the study of contemporary philosophy. When one realizes how elusive is human thought, how deep-seated human curiosity, this claim to bring every

thought into captivity to the obedience of Rome becomes magnificent in its audacity.

Nor does the theory remain merely a theory. It is carried out in great detail through an elaborate machinery. This consists in part of institutions maintained and controlled by the church. These institutions begin with the parochial school, and continue to the university. In these institutions the child's course of study is prescribed from his earliest years, and carried on through his period of professional study. But apart from its own schools, the church has agencies by which it attempts to control the thought-life of the Catholic even when he is educated in secular institutions. The *Index* of prohibited books is one cog in this complicated machine. Some years ago Henri Lasserre, a devout French Catholic, was cured of a serious disease by the Virgin of Lourdes. In gratitude for this signal mercy he conceived the plan of making a translation of the four Gospels into modern French, so that the story of the great healer might be made accessible to the multitudes of his fellow-Catholics in France who were ignorant of it. The translation was made and approved by the church; it had a success beyond the author's hope. Multitudes of French Catholics began to read the Gospels in Lasserre's rendering. The authorities were alarmed. They did not know whereto this thing might grow. The *imprimatur* was withdrawn. Lasserre's book appeared upon the *Index*, and its copies disappeared from the bookstores of France.

If the church exercises such strict control over

the reading of the ordinary Roman Catholic, it applies a very different standard to those whom it has set apart for its ministry. When the candidate has been sufficiently tested and his grounding in the faith has been secured beyond a doubt, there is no branch of human knowledge which is not open to him. For the church has work to be done in the world of men, and for this its servants must know men, and the thoughts of men. In no modern schools is specialization carried further than in the schools of Rome; for no form of practical work, save possibly that of the Great General Staff alone, are men so thoroughly prepared. Time counts for nothing in this preparation. It may take five years, it may take twenty, to sharpen the tool for its uses. An English gentleman who was converted late in life and became a missionary of the Society of Jesus to the Dyaks of Borneo, was required to spend three years in mastering the Latin tongue as a spoken language, before the preparation for his special work began.<sup>7</sup> In London the Church of Rome maintains a bureau of information on all Protestant social movements. A settlement worker in Edinburgh who visited the Director found him more completely and accurately informed as to the present state of social thinking and activity among Protestants than he was himself.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The complete training of a Jesuit, who is admitted to the inner circle of the Society, requires nineteen years.

<sup>8</sup> In Vannes, a suburb of Paris, there is an Institute of Social Research known as Action Populaire, which commands the full time service of nineteen Jesuit fathers. On the institutions of research in Rome, such as the Biblical Institute, the Archeological Institute, etc., cf. Williams, Michael, *The Catholic Church in Action* (New York, 1934), pp. 34 *seq.*

This high degree of specialization is made possible because of the church's requirement of the celibacy of the clergy. Free from the care of wife and child, the priest can go where he is sent, stay as long as he is needed, and give all the time that is required for the performance of any specific task. A further help in the training of specialized workers is furnished by the religious orders, which, as we have seen, are societies of selected persons banded together under a definite rule of life, and set apart for special tasks of service. Among these services, education has always taken a foremost place. Many of the great scholars of the Catholic Church have been monks. In the sixth century Benedict of Nursia made study a part of his rule. In the thirteenth century Dominicans and Franciscans contended for mastery of the field of learning. In the sixteenth century came Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus. Today it is still true that the schools of Roman Catholicism are largely conducted by the orders.

#### 4. THE CHURCH AS DIRECTOR OF CONSCIENCE

So amazing a claim—a claim to control not simply the actions of men, but their very thoughts—must encounter serious opposition. Before the mind can be mastered, the will must be subdued. For this the church has devised an elaborate discipline. For the ordinary Christian this is exercised through penance and the confessional; for the more heroic and exceptional spirits, through the rules of the different orders.

The penitential system of the Roman Catholic Church is one of the most extraordinary instruments that the ingenuity of man has ever invented. That it should not only have been conceived but put into practice on so large a scale is one of the marvels of history. By this device the church attempts to reach each individual of all its millions, keep in touch, not only with his acts, but with his thoughts and desires, and prescribe what it wishes him to do under conditions which give the best promise of success. Rome is not the only church which has tried to exercise such control, but it is the only one that has even measurably succeeded. An intelligent Russian was once requested to explain the penitential discipline of the Orthodox Church. "How far," he was asked, "does your theory agree with that of Rome?" "Our theory," he said, "is substantially the same as that of Rome—but," and here a genial smile overspread his face, "our priests are very good-natured." It is the story of a great part of historic religion—the story of a great claim nullified by the practice of those who make it. But in Rome, at least among many priests, this claim to discipline the individual is taken seriously, and the confessional is a part of living religion.

A prominent American layman once attended a mission at the Church of the Paulist Fathers in New York City. He was amazed at what he saw. At five o'clock in the morning, while the city was still dark, the church was crowded with men. "Why can we not do this," he asked, "in our Protestant churches?"

The answer is simple. Give the minister the power the priest claims and persuade the people that he really possesses it, and you can crowd your churches with worshippers at any hour. For the power that filled the church was the power of the confessional, and the power of the confessional is the power to remit or to reduce the temporal penalty of sin, both in this life and in that which is to come.<sup>9</sup>

- I am well aware that this power, as defined by Catholic theologians, is confined within exact limits, and is not open to the attacks often made against it by ignorant Protestant controversialists. It is not the power to forgive sins. That belongs to God alone. Still less is it the power to permit sin. It is the power, after appropriate confession and repentance, to remit a part or all of the temporal punishment of sin, by substituting a less disagreeable equivalent. Catholic theology distinguishes a double penalty for sin:—the eternal penalty, which is the loss of the soul; the temporal penalty through which the soul is purified either in this life, or in purgatory. The latter consists of suffering, both of body and mind, and may include every torment which can be conceived by the imagination. God alone can remit the eternal penalty of sin. But the church has had committed to it the power of dispensing with its temporal punishment. When one reads the lurid pages of Dante's

<sup>9</sup> I do not overlook the fact that the disciplinary function of the Confessional is only one phase of its influence. To many who use it, it supplies a felt need for direction and counsel, of which they would gladly avail themselves even if the practice of confession were not required.

*Purgatorio* and realizes that what is there described is believed by multitudes of Catholics to be actually happening to countless human beings, among whom their friends or relatives may be included; when, on the other hand, one considers how easy are the substitutes which the church provides—a pilgrimage, the saying of certain prayers, attendance at certain services, and the like—it is not strange that the appeal to weak human nature should be strong, or that the priests who make it should wield an extraordinary power.<sup>10</sup>

But this purely negative control, which appeals to the sense of fear and of gain, would never of itself explain the power of Rome, or account for its continuing influence. There are nobler natures who cannot be thus controlled, and for them the church has another and a higher message. Its appeal is not to the fear of purgatory, but to the love of heaven. And not the distant heaven simply which will come by and by, but the heaven which may open in the devout soul at any moment. When that moment comes, earth's enticements are forgotten, and the spirit stands face to face with its God in ecstasy indescribable.

There is, to be sure, a price to be paid. To enjoy this communion—the goal of the great mystics and saints of all ages—the body must be disciplined, the desires chastened, the human will brought into subjection to the will of God. This discipline requires

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Heiler, Friedrich, *Der Katholizismus* (München, 1923), pp. 269-275.



sacrifices far more rigorous than the church asks of ordinary believers. It must continue through long years. It may lead through darkness and doubt. It may involve the loss of human companionship, and even—for a time—of the sense of the divine presence. But in the end it will bring its reward. Greatest of all the gifts the church has to give is the knowledge of the path that will lead the ardent spirit to this goal. That path the church has marked out in the rules of the different orders which have for their aim the cultivation of the higher life.

#### 5. THE CHURCH AS CONFRATERNITY OF SERVICE

And when the discipline is complete, what then? When the Roman Church has trained its converts—both the higher and the lower—what will it do with them? It will put them to the two main uses for which they have been trained. It will use them in a fellowship of service. It will make them agents of its propaganda.

No account of the Roman Catholic Church can be complete which does not emphasize the fact that it regards its converts as members of a confraternity of service. Moral theology is one of the three great branches of Catholic theology, and good works fill an even larger place than dogma in the creed. But the works, like the doctrines, are rigidly prescribed, and both alike acquire their significance because of the setting in which the church places them.

The good works which the church prescribes are

of two kinds, corresponding to the distinction which we have already made between ceremonial and ethical religion. In part they consist of the regular performance of the ritual of religion, including in this a number of acts of worship and devotion which have no immediate connection with the formal services of the church; in part they consist of acts of kindness and goodwill to one's fellowmen. Charity has in the past played a great rôle in Catholic piety, and the giving of alms has been regarded as a good work in itself, irrespective of its effect upon the recipient. Catholics have planted their hospitals and their orphanages all over the world, but in the main they have confined their ministry either to their own members or to those whom they hoped to win for the church. Recently, however, Catholic ethics has been giving more attention to man's wider social relationships, and the economic and political questions raised by modern industry are being carefully studied by Catholic scholars. The conservative attitude taken by earlier Catholic pronouncements toward the existing social order is giving place to a more sympathetic and discriminating judgment.<sup>11</sup> So much is this the case that a certain journalist in the United States, whose interest in the current news is more in evidence than his knowledge of history, has prophesied that it would be the Catholic rather than the Protestant Church which would become the champion of the

<sup>11</sup> Intelligent Roman Catholics frequently date the beginning of this change from the well-known Encyclical of Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891. In this Encyclical Leo was recalling the modern church to a conception of the church's mission already expressed by Aquinas.

masses, and the foremost leader in the reform of the present social system.

How far this will prove to be the case, the future must reveal. But those who entertain rosy hopes of this kind will do well to remember that the test by which the church judges all good works, whether in the ceremonial or the ethical sphere, is that they must be such as it prescribes and such as will enhance its power. If it must choose between the ceremonial and the ethical side of religion, the ceremonial will come first. This does not mean that the performance of ceremonial acts alone is sufficient apart from inward sincerity, but that a man's attitude towards the ordinances of the church will be the surest test of his spiritual state. However often and however far a man may fall below the church's ethical requirements, if he retains his connection with the church and continues his attendance upon the sacrament, he has access to a divine resource not available for other men. But if he breaks with the church he throws this help away.<sup>12</sup>

To be faithful in the performance of one's religious duties, then, and to deal justly and kindly with one's neighbor is to fulfil Rome's ethical requirement for the ordinary Christian. But for the exceptional spirit the church has something at once more exacting and the more rewarding. It summons him to the great task of winning for the church the

<sup>12</sup> This was the excuse given by a Roman Catholic priest to a friend of mine, a neighboring Protestant minister, for failing to discipline one of his parishioners who was responsible for maintaining a particularly demoralizing saloon which was corrupting the boys of the community.

entire world. For him service becomes propaganda.

This lies in the genius of imperialistic religion. To one who holds the Catholic faith, there can be no service comparable to winning one's fellowmen to the allegiance of Mother Church. The more intelligent one is, the more clearly one will see this; the more unselfish he is, the more keenly he will feel it. When, after long wandering, Newman found his way to Rome at last, it was, he says, like coming into port after long tossing on the open sea. A generous spirit would sacrifice all that he has to share such an experience with others.

It is only against this background that we can understand the ethics of the Roman Catholic propaganda. It is the ethics of militant imperialism everywhere—the ethics of war, not of peace, though for the Roman, as for most other imperialists, the ultimate goal is a peace that shall know no end. This consciousness of a divine commission to dominate at all costs explains the puzzling and unlovely features of much Catholic apologetic, its lack of frankness, its willingness to yield all for the one thing necessary. This explains, too, the ruthless attitude toward irreconcilable opponents—the *Index*, the inquisition, and the stake. This explains finally the elaborate machinery through which missionaries are trained and marshalled—the Congregation of the Propaganda and the Society of Jesus. They are the tools which Rome uses in pursuit of its one supreme end, the world-wide triumph of that church whose victory is identified with the will of God.

## 6. HOW THE INTELLIGENT ROMAN CATHOLIC JUSTIFIES HIS SUBMISSION

It is in the light of this picture of many-sided activity that we must understand the appeal which the Roman Catholic Church makes to the intelligent among our contemporaries. Nothing perplexes the average Protestant more than the character of the converts Rome is winning. They are not men of narrow outlook or limited experience only. They include some of the most earnest and devoted spirits of our day—poets like Alfred Noyes,<sup>13</sup> journalists like Arnold Lunn,<sup>14</sup> preachers like William Orchard.<sup>15</sup> They are men of the most widely different background and interest who have found themselves drawn by some irresistible attraction to the church which claims to be the mother of us all. The simple trust of the Irish maidservant or of the Italian peasant one can understand, but what shall one say of a thinker like Baron von Hügel, a personality whom many competent students of religion regard as the most creative intellect of our time? What can he find in the Roman Church to satisfy him? How can he reconcile himself to the sacrifice the church demands of him—the sacrifice of private judgment; the loss of fellowship; the toleration of superstition, often of downright immorality?

The Baron has himself given us the answer in his

<sup>13</sup> *The Unknown God* (New York, 1934).

<sup>14</sup> *Now I See* (New York, 1933).

<sup>15</sup> Orchard, W. E., *From Faith to Faith* (London, 1933).

writings.<sup>16</sup> I shall not attempt here to summarize it. But it may be possible to state in a few words some of the ways in which those of our thoughtful contemporaries who have made the act of submission which Rome requires justify what they have done.

One source of help in the case of intellectual difficulty is furnished by the distinction between the disciplinary power of the church and its responsibility for the definition of dogma. Infallibility indeed the church claims, and this of the most uncompromising character, but only for the greatest matters and under the most extraordinary safeguards. Most of the church's teaching, even on doctrinal matters, is of a prudential character and admits of later interpretation, supplement, and correction. That correction will not indeed alter its essential character, but it may put it in a new setting and remove the impression of contradicting science which in its present formulation it may possess. When an opinion or a book has been condemned, it is always possible for the author to hope that when his true meaning has been more exactly explained some later decision will show that it is not inconsistent with sound Catholic teaching. In the meantime as a good Catholic it is his duty to acquiesce in the present decision. What in his heart he may hope and believe concerns himself alone. What he may say and do concerns all the faithful.

Much too must be conceded to the weakness of

<sup>16</sup> *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, esp. Vol. I, pp. 227-298, and Vol. II, pp. 243-253 (New York, 1921 and 1926, respectively).

human nature. Thoughtful Catholics see more clearly than most Protestants how limited is the vision of the best of us, how much we depend for our apprehension of the simplest truths upon symbol and picture. The superstition he sees all about him does not trouble the Catholic, for he knows that it is only a cruder example of a weakness of which he is conscious in himself. As man's body is formed of the stuff of which rocks and trees are made, yet God has breathed into it the breath of life; so ways of thinking that are naïve and childlike may bring us into touch with divine reality. So in his use of the simple means the church provides—the crucifix, the rosary, the sign of the Cross—he does what the simplest peasant or the youngest child can do, and so doing realizes, as many Protestants fail to do, the essential brotherhood of man.<sup>17</sup>

But it is not by way of concession and limitation only, or even chiefly, that the church eases the way of the thoughtful Roman Catholic. There is something in the very conception of the Catholic Church that satisfies a deep need in his soul. If God is really such as Christ has taught us to expect, he must have made place in his world for something like the Church of Rome, a single institution covering the whole of life, adequate to every need, leaving nothing to chance, and furnished with the authority that is needed to fit

<sup>17</sup> Baron von Hügel has told us that his director, while approving his practice of spending most of his time during his hours of devotion in the prayer of quiet, advised him to use the rosary several times each day in order to be reminded of his kinship with simple folk who found this primitive method of prayer helpful.

it for its task. Such a comprehensive instrument of the divine purpose he sees in Rome, and only in Rome. It was Rome's answer to the need, already there, for some incarnation in fact of the immanent idea that made of Father Hecker, friend of Emerson and of Aldrich, a New Englander of the New Englanders, trained in the transcendental philosophy of Concord, the founder and the first Superior of the Paulist Fathers.<sup>18</sup>

Rome appeals to the thoughtful Catholic further because it gives him something to do. "How is it," I once asked a cultivated Englishman, inspector in one of the minor services of the London County Council, "that you are content with a post that offers you so little public recognition?" "It is because of the larger whole of which my work is a part" was the answer. "There may be little publicity to what I do, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that if it is challenged I have the City of London at my back." It is in this spirit that the thoughtful Roman Catholic takes up his work. Unobtrusive though it may seem, it is part of a larger whole and if it is challenged he has the whole church on which to rely for support. This explains the satisfaction which the student of canon law takes in his comparison of precedents. It is not of the past he is thinking but of the present, and of the future; and if by good fortune the right solution of some knotty problem is found and the needed gap is filled, he has the satisfaction of thinking that into the eternal temple,

<sup>18</sup> Elliott, Walter, *The Life of Father Hecker* (New York, 1894).



which is God's Church, this stone of his quarrying has been fitted. In such a task time counts for little. All the ages are at the disposal of the church. "When do you expect the work to be finished?" I once asked Cardinal Gasquet, the octogenarian editor of the new edition of the *Vulgate*, as he was showing me the first volume of that monumental work. "Oh," he said, "who knows? Perhaps in a hundred years. What does it matter?"

What does it matter indeed, when one is building for eternity. And if it be said that the price in the limitation of life's normal contacts is too high to pay, the answer is that the surrender is only for the time and on the surface. For all his separation from his Protestant fellow-Christians, the thoughtful Catholic knows that in God's sight they too are children dear in his heart. In them, too, he sees God's Spirit at work and confidently expects that the barriers which now separate him from them will one day be removed. So in his thought he makes place for them in the church invisible, which is to be the church triumphant.

*PART II (CONTINUED)*  
*CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY*

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIANITY THAT IS CATHOLIC BUT NOT  
ROMAN

1. Where Orthodoxy Parts Company with Rome.
2. The Catholicism of the Orthodox Churches.
3. The Present Crisis of Orthodox Christianity.
4. The Old Catholics.
5. In What Sense Anglo-Catholics Are Catholic.

*Orthodox Christianity differs from Roman Christianity partly in its greater emphasis upon the permanent and unchanging elements in Christianity, partly in its more optimistic and tolerant character. The contrast appears most clearly in the differing conception of the monastic ideal. Orthodox monasticism is almost exclusively of the contemplative sort. One looks in vain in Orthodoxy for any parallel to the Society of Jesus. Like the Lutherans among the Protestants the Orthodox are content to bear their witness through public worship and through saintly life, leaving to God the responsibility for radical social change.*

*A further difference between Orthodoxy and Rome is the more friendly attitude which the Orthodox show toward Protestants. Unlike Rome, Orthodoxy finds no difficulty in co-operating with Protestants in the various forms of the ecumenical movement and has been an active participant in the World Conferences of Stockholm and of Lausanne.*

*Other Catholic groups that need consideration are the Old Catholic Church which broke with Rome in 1870 on the issue of the Vatican dogma of infallibility and the Anglo-Catholic Party in the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Churches. This Party, which owes its origin to the Tractarian Movement of the first third of the last century, maintains that the Anglican Communion is Catholic in exactly the same sense in which the Orthodox Churches are Catholic, and the Old Catholic Church is Catholic; that in breaking with Rome it did not surrender its right to an integral place in the Church Catholic, but only protested against certain errors which had been introduced by Rome; that it constitutes therefore, with the Orthodox and Rome, one of the three great branches of the Church Catholic, with a right to the name every whit as good as the others.*

## 1. WHERE ORTHODOXY PARTS COMPANY WITH ROME

When one studies the issues on which East and West parted in the great schism which has divided the Christian Church for a thousand years they seem, measured by the magnitude of the event, of an inconceivable pettiness. A difference in the interpretation of the creed; whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone or from the Father and from the Son; a dispute about precedence—what should be the exact relation between the Bishop of Rome and his fellow-potentates whose seats were at Byzantium, at Alexandria, and at Antioch: such were the matters in dispute. One is reminded of Gibbon's sneer about the Council of Nicæa—how men fought for fifty years for an iota: whether Father and Son had the same nature or only a nature that was similar. So it is easy to think of the theologians as concerned for mint, anise, and cummin, while the souls of men were perishing and the seamless robe of Christ was rent.

This sense of unreality in the issues which seem vital to Orthodoxy is accentuated by the fact that the paths of the Orthodox and of the Protestant seldom meet. There is a geographical separation which makes understanding more than ordinarily difficult, and this spatial difficulty is accentuated by the fact that much of the contemporary literature of the Eastern Church is in a language to which few West-

erners have access : modern Greek, the Slavic dialects, and Russian. It is only within the last few years and as a result of experiences presently to be described that the gulf which separates East and West has been spanned and points of contact established which make mutual understanding possible.

No one who has made the transition and enjoyed the contact can resist the conviction that in Orthodoxy he has to do with a type of Catholicism which in significant, and not simply in technical and external ways, differs from the Catholicism of Rome. And when he tries to discover where the difference lies, the first thing which strikes him is the larger place given by Rome to the law and all that goes with it. The Roman Church is to an extraordinary extent a legal church. Its theology is in the last analysis law ; and its theologians, like their colleagues in the secular field, are not simply commentators but judges. Even the saint can win his right to the devotion of the faithful only through a process in which counsel argue the case on either side and the judge pronounces the verdict.<sup>1</sup> Orthodoxy shares with Roman Catholicism the acceptance of tradition as an organ of divine revelation. It shares also a conception of the will which makes a place for human merit, but it differs from Rome in that it has developed no agency for the interpretation of tradition that functions continuously and so makes possible the detailed guidance and discipline of the individual. Unlike Rome it has no official organ through

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Macken, Thomas F., *The Canonisation of Saints* (Dublin, 1910).

which its decisions can be enforced. In Orthodoxy authority, though real, is less defined. It is democratic rather than imperialistic and it is expressed through the consensus of the faithful.

This difference can be accounted for in part by the history that lies back of it. When Constantine was converted to Christianity he brought about a connection between church and state which has continued in the East ever since; and when the break-up of the Roman Empire had deprived Byzantium of its pristine importance as the acknowledged centre of the Empire, the close connection between the church and the state which was its protector and sponsor was continued in the units into which the Empire was broken up. With the conversion to Christianity of new peoples, notably the Slavs, the centre of gravity shifted and Constantinople, while still having a pre-eminence of courtesy as the city of the ecumenical patriarch, no longer possessed its earlier authority. The region of which it was the natural head contained only a minority of the faithful. It was Russia, with its one hundred and twenty million people, and the Slavic states that were bound by ties of blood to Russia which became the centre of strength for Orthodoxy; and between Greek and Slavic Orthodoxy there developed a tension which has continued to this day.

In the West on the other hand, the absence of any strong secular power in Rome made the Pope the natural spokesman of Western Catholicism and its leader in its struggle with the Emperor for control

of Western civilization; and when in the West the break-up of the Empire into national states left the Pope with no single political rival with which to deal, he still maintained within each nation his claim to spiritual authority and control.

So as the Catholicism of the West became more and more imperialistic, that of the East tended to become more democratic.<sup>2</sup> Orthodoxy, as we have seen, is today, so far as its government is concerned, a group of autonomous national churches which find their bond of union not in any universally accepted code of law but in the acceptance of an unwritten tradition and the experience of a common piety.

This close connection between the nation and the church was accentuated by the fact that with the coming of the Turk many of the older agencies of government were destroyed and the Greeks and Bulgars, like the other oppressed peoples, found in their ecclesiastical head, metropolitan or patriarch as the case might be, their natural protector and the spokesman of their national self-consciousness. So Orthodox Christianity acquired a national character which has continued ever since and makes many supporters of the church from patriotic reasons who have little understanding of its teachings or sympathy with its practices. Many years ago I stood beside Mr. Kalapothakes, the minister of the Protestant Church in Athens, in the new building which

<sup>2</sup> This appears in the larger place given to laymen, both in the theory and in the practice of the church. In theory, laymen constitute the fourth order of the hierarchy. In practice some of the greatest Orthodox theologians have been laymen.

the congregation had erected for its worship. Pointing to the eastern wall where the Nicene Creed was frescoed in the original Greek, he called my attention to the absence of the words "and from the Son" which meet us in the Western form of the Creed. "We are Protestants," he said with pride, "But we are Greeks." "What would happen," I asked, "if you were to add the *filioque*?" "In twenty-four hours," he answered, "not one stone of this building would remain upon another."

But all that we have thus far said has to do with the framework of the temple. Let us enter the doors and make the acquaintance of the worshippers.

## 2. THE CATHOLICISM OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Some dozen years before the outbreak of the Great War I visited the Convent of Alexander Nevsky in St. Petersburg. Among the monks, most of whom could speak only Russian, I was fortunate enough to discover one who could speak German; and from him I learned the story of his life. He was born a Lutheran in the German-speaking provinces of Southern Russia, and when he grew up entered the army and in due course became an officer. Yet he was not at peace. There was something in him which army life did not satisfy, something which religion alone could supply. In the somewhat formal and unemotional religion of his boyhood, he had not found it. So, like Newman before him, he set out on the quest of the true church. One after



another he tried the various forms of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant alike, only to discover at last that the true church of which he had been in search was all the time at his door. In Orthodoxy he found that which satisfied his heart's desire. Resigning his position in the army, he became a monk and in due time found his way to the Convent of Alexander Nevsky, where I met him.

In his desire to share with others what he had found he wrote the story of his conversion and printed it both in Russian and in German in a book with the title *How I Found the True Church*.<sup>3</sup> It is an orthodox parallel of Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. Let me take it for my text in my endeavor to interpret the genius of Orthodox piety.

Two things attracted this eager spirit to Orthodoxy: one the fact that alone among all the churches it had preserved the tradition of primitive Christianity unchanged; the other the fact that in its service it satisfied more than any other form of Christianity man's craving for beauty.

These are indeed characteristics of Eastern Christianity which must impress any thoughtful student. Of all forms of Christianity, the Orthodox is that which has not only changed least but which is most opposed to change. Where the faces of Roman and Protestant alike are turned forward, Orthodoxy is content to live in the changeless world of eternity. Secure in the possession of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, it is enough that it guard the

<sup>3</sup>Tideboehl, Paul von, *Wie ich die wahre Kirche fand* (St. Petersburg, 1902).

trust committed to it against all admixture of error.

If the jewel is precious, the setting is worthy of it. No church has developed the conduct of its service in such detail as the Orthodox. In none is the symbolism more elaborate and the manner of its presentation more beautiful. Nowhere is the element of mystery which enters into all great religion so much in evidence. Nowhere do pictorial art and music so combine to suggest the glories of the celestial country.

It is difficult to describe the impression produced by the Eastern mass. One must witness it to appreciate it and one must go not in the spirit of the critic, but of the worshipper, to share the experience through which many of our fellow-Christians are helped to realize the presence of God.

Among the experiences of my life which stand out with special clearness is a Sunday spent some years ago in the Balkans. Under the leadership of Bishop Irenæ, the well-loved Bishop of Novi Sad, an open air Eucharist was to be celebrated in the Monastery of Kovil, some twenty miles from Novi Sad, the seat of the episcopate. For days the people had been assembling—men, women, and little children coming, many of them, from distances of forty miles or more on foot or in their primitive peasant carts. About an open-air platform, upon which had been erected a simple iconostasis,<sup>4</sup> the people gathered, some ten thousand in number; and when one looked at their faces as they mounted the platform one by one to

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 130.

receive the consecrated elements or joined with the choir in the chants as the service moved to its appointed climax, one realized the power of living religion to bring solace to people facing hardships and poverty of the extremest kind. And when, the service over, the people gathered in little groups about the monastery to report to the Bishop of Ochrida what they had been doing in their brotherhoods to foster Bible study and keep the spirit of piety alive, one could no longer think of Orthodoxy as a type of religion that had had its day.

That unforgettable service held under the open sky is typical of many experiences that have made Orthodoxy live for me—hours spent in unhurried conversation, as with some kindred spirit I have explored the meaning of worship and we have shared each with the other what the discovery of the present God had meant to us; hours spent in the company of some worshipping congregation in Athens or in Constantinople where, on Palm Sunday or Good Friday, the glorious music of the Eastern mass has interpreted to a Western listener what the words spoken alone were powerless to convey.

Both these characteristics of Orthodox piety—its changelessness and its love of the beautiful—have a common root: the mystical conception of religion. Mysticism is timeless religion. It lives in the eternal. It is æsthetic religion as well; for God, who is everlasting, is all-beautiful, and in the harmony of his infinite perfection there is no alloy. In this world of chance and change nothing is perfect, nothing is

lasting. But with God all is complete, every desire is satisfied. And in the sacrament, contact is made between our imperfection and God's perfection and the prayer is answered: "O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

Orthodox piety, I repeat, is mystical piety. But it is not the negative mysticism of the Far East, which has no place for human individuality, not even the mysticism of the great Spanish ascetics, St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross. It is the mysticism of the artist and of the poet, the mysticism of a Fra Angelico, of a Raphael, of a Wordsworth; the joy that goes with the discovery that God is everywhere present, and wherever present is satisfying.

The Eastern liturgy has a universal character. Its symbolism reaches out and takes in all life. As the priest, censer in hand, passes from icon to icon and from person to person, recognizing each by an appropriate gesture, so the thought of the worshipper reaches out and takes in the whole world of nature and of man, the world which Christ redeemed, the man in whom he became incarnate; and nothing any more seems common and unclean, since God through Christ has sanctified it all.

This explains two further characteristics of Orthodox piety: its optimistic and its tolerant character.

Orthodox piety is optimistic. It sees God everywhere. This appears in the view taken of nature. It appears no less in the view taken of man.

It appears in the view taken of nature. Rome, with its legal theology, draws a hard and fast line

between nature and the supernatural and reserves to the church, which is the guardian of supernatural religion, the power to make possible the transition through miracle. But to the Orthodox there is no such hard and fast line. The natural world no less than the church is God's handiwork, and creation no less than redemption the work of grace. There is sin, no doubt, and man must repent. But repentance requires no such cumbrous machinery as Rome supplies. Let a man turn to God in his heart; let a man come to the church with his prayer and all will be well.

This optimistic attitude appears further in the view taken of man. The hard and fast line between priesthood and laity which is so characteristic of Rome is not drawn so sharply in the Orthodox Church. There is no doubt a difference between priest and people, but it is not so great as Rome would have us believe. Bishops to be sure must be celibate, but the ordinary clergy marry; and the laity, like the priests, have a part in the government of the church. In its theology too the laity have a large part to play. Many of the greatest theologians of the Orthodox have been laymen; and to know the genius of its piety you must read not only the works of Father Bulgakoff<sup>5</sup> and Professor Gloubokowsky,<sup>6</sup> but the stories of Tolstoi and the novels of Dostievsky.

This difference appears in the character of East-

<sup>5</sup> Bulgakoff, Sergius, head of the Russian Seminary in Paris.

<sup>6</sup> Gloubokowsky, The Reverend Nicholas M., D.D., Emeritus Professor, Sofia, Bulgaria.

ern monasticism. It is, as we should expect, more contemplative, less active, than the monasticism of the West. There is no Eastern counterpart of the Society of Jesus. There is not even anything that corresponds to the Dominicans or the Franciscans. The Eastern monk is not a missionary. He does not go among the people, not at least unless he is called as a bishop to the government of the church. He lives his life in the monastery in contemplation and prayer, for he knows that the God he worships will find his own way to bring help to his fellows who are in need.

If the Eastern monk feels little responsibility for cultivating the piety of the layman, that does not mean that nothing is being done, only that when it is done the initiative comes from the layman himself. Orthodoxy has been prolific in popular movements that have sprung up spontaneously without the initiative of the clergy; and today when official religion is forbidden in Russia, it is through the spontaneous action of groups of men and women that vital religion is still kept alive.

This readiness to use the services of laymen in religion is one of the hopeful features of Orthodox piety, one which in the critical days that lie ahead may have far-reaching consequences. One of the most striking features of the open-air mass at Kovil was the presence among the worshippers of little groups of laymen who in the Province of Ochrida had been meeting informally for Bible reading and prayer. When I heard the leaders of these groups

each in turn tell the story of the year's experience I felt as though I were in some meeting of the Y. M. C. A. or some gathering of primitive Methodists. A religion that can set laymen studying the Bible and praying is a religion that is still very much alive.

I have already touched in principle upon the last feature of Orthodox piety to which I shall make reference—its tolerant character. Of all non-Roman Catholics, the Orthodox find it easiest to understand Protestants and to have fellowship with them. One thing alone perplexes them, the intense activity of Protestants, their dissatisfaction with things as they are, their determination at all costs to set them right.

The Orthodox feels no such dissatisfaction. He is conscious within himself of the impulse to no such activity. For he knows, with Pippa, in Browning's poem, that "God's in his heaven: All's right with the world." So he is content to wait in faith for the ultimate consummation that is sure to come and in the meantime in the great service of Easter morning he lives over in anticipation the good time coming and, when he answers the cry, "Christ is risen," with the triumphant response: "He is risen indeed," he feels that he is indeed even here and now victor over sin and pain and death.

### 3. THE PRESENT CRISIS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

I have tried, as far as it is possible for one not to the manner born, to interpret the genius of Orthodox piety as it meets us in the lives of those who accept

and follow the teaching of the church. But I should not be loyal to the truth if I did not recognize that this is only one side of the picture. Orthodoxy has its high lights and they are brilliant, but it has its shadows too and they are dark.

On the same trip to Russia which gave me my acquaintance with the author of the Russian *Apologia* I brought with me a letter of introduction to a young priest who was working among the young people of the Orthodox Church in the effort to rekindle their interest in religion. But it was not possible for me to meet him, for he had come under the displeasure of the ecclesiastical authorities and was in hiding. That was not an uncommon experience in the Russian Church of that day. The church, so far as its official organization was concerned, was for all practical purposes an arm of the state and any one who became too active in his criticism of existing practices made himself suspect and found the door closed against him.

So when the great upheaval came which destroyed the Czar's government it swept the church with it in its remorseless cataclysm. In the church the revolutionaries saw only an agency of reaction, the tool the clever politicians used in their efforts to deceive the people; and among the enemies against whom relentless war was declared were the priests and ministers of religion.

The story of the persecution of the Russian Church has been told many times and it is not my purpose to retell it here. It will be enough to de-



scribe the present crisis in which it has involved Orthodox Christianity and to point out some of the issues which it has raised.

That crisis concerns the Russian Church most directly, but it has affected the other Orthodox churches as well. Like the churches of the West, they are facing the new spirit which the War has released, the spirit of an aggressive secularism that has lost all faith in a single directing power and will accept salvation from no hands but its own. It is not in Russia only that Orthodoxy confronts a militant atheism, but in Rumania and in Bulgaria and in Greece, and upon its ability to meet this new situation successfully will depend the place it will hold in the Christianity of the future.

In the Rue de Crimée in Paris, at the end of a little alley that debouches from the main street, is a group of modest buildings which is the home of the Orthodox Seminary. Climb the hill that leads to them at six o'clock some Saturday afternoon and you will find yourself at the door of a church where service is about to be held; and if you enter and take your place with the little group of worshippers who have gathered in the dim light to offer their evening prayers, you will be lifted for the moment above this world of anxiety and change and may refresh your spirit with renewed contact with eternal reality. There is something intimate and familiar in the company who have assembled, something that makes you feel at home; yet withal there is a sense of reverence and of awe that is uplifting.

That group in the Rue de Crimée is one of the centres from which the dismembered church of Russia is trying to reconstitute its ecclesiastical life. It is the place where the priests are trained who are ministering to the scattered congregations of the Diaspora, the recruiting station from which it is hoped the builders may be drawn who, when the doors are opened and Russia is again free, may rebuild the Russian Church of the future.

It is no easy task on which those who are responsible for its leadership are engaged, no slight problem with which they are confronted. Deprived of their basis of organization in the state, they must find some new centre from which to develop the ministry and the institutions of religion. Confronted with a world in which the young people are being trained in a philosophy that leaves God out, they have to make a fresh place for faith in an age of science. Accustomed from time immemorial to be satisfied with a purely mystical and contemplative piety, they can no longer escape the demand for a religion that will have a definite social message. So Professor Bulgakoff and those who work with him are rethinking the theological foundations of Orthodoxy and in the attempt are finding points of contact with other phases of Christianity which hitherto they have barely touched.

It is a cause for congratulation therefore that the Orthodox should have taken their place in the ecumenical movement which has sprung up since the War. They were represented both at Stockholm and

at Lausanne and they have taken an active and effective part in the Continuation Committees which have been carrying on the work of both.

One by-product, not the least important, of this new activity is the reflex influence which it is having upon the relation of the Orthodox Churches to one another. In the ecumenical movement Russian and Greek Orthodoxy find a welcome point of contact and the need of more effective organization is being more acutely felt. The demand for the calling of a pro-synod<sup>7</sup> makes itself heard and there is little doubt that in time the difficulties which now prevent its meeting will be overcome.

When it meets there will be many important questions which it will have to face. There is the question of organization. What is to take the place of the state as central and organizing principle in the different national churches; and when this has been found, in what ways are these churches to be related to one another?

There is the question of belief. What adjustments must be made to the changed world in which we are living? What concessions must be made to science, and how can the changelessness of Orthodox doctrine be reconciled with the spirit of change and progress which is the breath of the modern world?

There is the question of social reconstruction. Until recently the lands where Orthodoxy has had sway have been socially reactionary; but Russia has

<sup>7</sup> By this title the Orthodox designate the most comprehensive meeting of existing Orthodox churches which is possible in the present divided condition of Christendom.

shown that social backwardness is no barrier against the spirit of revolution. Already the rumblings of discontent can be heard in other Orthodox countries. What can the church do to restrain that spirit, or better still to direct it in constructive channels?

There is, finally, the question of the relation of the Orthodox Churches to the other branches of the Christian family. In the ecumenical movement, as we have seen, contact has already been made with Protestants. But that contact has raised a host of new problems which still await their solution. Is organic unity between Protestantism and Orthodoxy possible? If not, what measure of co-operation is practicable while existing divisions continue?

It is a piece of good fortune therefore that as they confront these difficult and perplexing problems the Orthodox should have the counsel of other Catholic bodies which, while themselves protestant, are not Protestant. There are two such bodies, each with its independent history and tradition: the Old Catholic Church and the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Anglican and Protestant-Episcopal Churches.

#### 4. THE OLD CATHOLICS<sup>8</sup>

In the year 1870, in the Palace of the Vatican where the last great Council of the Roman Church was meeting to perform the most solemn function that can be discharged by a Council of the Church,

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Williams, N. P., and Harris, C., *op. cit.*, pp. 531 *seq.*

the official definition of the church's doctrine, a number of eminent bishops were faced with a question of conscience of the most serious kind. By a large, but by no means unanimous, vote the Council had decided upon the promulgation of a new dogma, that of the infallibility of the Pope, and it was necessary for these bishops to decide what should be their attitude to the dogma when it was proclaimed. They had themselves been of the minority that had opposed the acceptance of the dogma. To them it seemed an illegitimate and improper departure from the tradition of the older Catholicism. Hitherto infallibility had been an attribute reserved for an ecumenical council alone and the Pope shared in it only as a member of that Council. Now it was proposed to vest it in him as an individual. No doubt there were safeguards proposed and the authority of the Council as a participating member was still recognized. Nevertheless the change seemed to them real and momentous. It was the final surrender of the democratic element which till then had been at least implicit in Catholicism. It made Rome in theory as well as in fact an imperialistic religion.

What were they to do? Some had left before the final decision was made so as not to be obliged to vote for that of which they disapproved. But the decision having been made, they could no longer evade their personal responsibility. Either they must bow to the decision of the majority or they must leave the church of their fathers. In Rome there was no third way open.

The majority submitted, some sooner, some later. But a little company resisted to the end. There was a loyalty, so it seemed to them, more compelling than that to the existing church. It was loyalty to conscience, that conscience which holds in its keeping the better church of the future. So with heavy hearts they undertook the task of finding a new home for their orphan spirits; and through this effort what we now know as the Old Catholic Church came to be.

It was not the action of the Vatican Council alone which led them to this decision. For years they had been troubled by the growth of what seemed to them unchristian elements in the government of the church. Many distinguished Catholic scholars (the name of Döllinger<sup>9</sup> will occur to all Protestant historians) saw in the new influences in control forces which they believed would be destructive of the finest element in Catholic piety, and this element it seemed to them their duty at any cost to keep alive. For others in such a situation, Protestantism with its ample liberty might seem to offer the needed home; but they were Catholics by conviction and they wished to testify to this fact by appropriate action. So they founded the organization that is now known as the Old Catholic Church.

For more than sixty years the Old Catholic Church has maintained its continuity. It numbers

<sup>9</sup> Döllinger, Johann Joseph Ignaz von, an eminent professor of church history and ecclesiastical law at the lyceum of Aschaffenburg and later at Munich, who lived from 1799 to 1890. Cf. Friedrich, J., *Ignaz von Döllinger* (Münich, 1899-1901); also *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. III, pp. 466-648 (New York, 1909).

today some four hundred thousand members. They are organized in twelve dioceses in six different countries. They have a three-fold purpose, in part protestant, in part constructive. It is their task as they see it: First, "To bear witness against the doctrines of papal supremacy and papal infallibility, and to make a general protest against the arbitrary policy of Rome in imposing new articles of belief; second, to cleanse the Catholic Church from all those later abuses and errors of practice which have no true claim to be considered Catholic, and thus to restore the polity and devotional life of the one, universal, and undivided church of the first ten centuries; third, to serve as a connecting link and an instrument for the future reunion of the churches."<sup>10</sup>

In pursuit of this unifying aim they have reached out their hands not only to those who are in the more literal and narrow sense of the term Catholics but to Catholic-minded Protestants as well. Especially close has been their fellowship with the Anglican Church. This fellowship has received formal ecclesiastical recognition by the action taken by the Convocations of Canterbury and York, which in January, 1932, unanimously approved the following statements agreed upon between the representatives of the Old Catholic churches and the churches of the Anglican communion at a conference held at Bonn on January 2, 1931:

"1. Each Communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other, and maintains its own.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, N. P., and Harris, Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 541.

2. Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the sacraments.

3. Intercommunion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinions, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practices characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith."<sup>11</sup>

Here we have a church, legally and by conviction Catholic, entering into formal ecclesiastical relations with a church which in its official attitude is recognized by the state as protestant and includes among its ministry those who are Protestants in a theological as well as in an ecclesiastical sense.

## 5. IN WHAT SENSE ANGLO-CATHOLICS ARE CATHOLIC<sup>12</sup>

More difficult to define than the position of the Old Catholics is that of the group which calls itself Anglo-Catholic. It is more difficult because, unlike the Old Catholics who, however limited in numbers, have at least a church of their own, there is no external unit to which they correspond. They form a party within a church which, like the other Protestant churches, rejects the authority of Rome and which today includes many who on the points at

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 546. Similar action was taken by the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States at its General Convention in 1935.

<sup>12</sup> Stewart, H. L., *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism* (Oxford, 1929).



which Protestantism takes issue with Catholicism desire to be known as Protestant.<sup>13</sup> The claim of these Anglican Protestants that the Church of England and her sister Communions are Protestant Churches is repudiated by the Anglo-Catholics. They maintain that these churches are Catholic in exactly the same sense in which the Orthodox churches are Catholic, and the Old Catholic Church is Catholic; that in breaking with Rome they did not surrender their right to an integral place in the Church Catholic, but only protested against certain errors which had been introduced by Rome; that they constitute therefore, with the Orthodox and Rome, one of the three great branches of the Church Catholic, with a right to the name every whit as good as the others.<sup>14</sup>

This explains certain curious anomalies in the Anglo-Catholic position such as this, that if they could have their way they would deny to their Protestant fellow-churchmen the right to the same freedom of worship within the Anglican Church which they claim for themselves. In a Catholic Church, so they believe, only those forms of worship and of belief have a place which can be justified by Catholic tradition. Hence they would remove from the law and practice of the church whatever gives it its Protestant character. This explains too their intolerant

<sup>13</sup> The position of the Anglo-Catholics as a party is recognized by Father Kelly in his book *Catholicity*, pp. 17-36.

<sup>14</sup> This is what is sometimes known as the branch theory of the church, a theory by the way which is not accepted either by the Romanists or by the Orthodox, and which, even in Anglo-Catholic circles, is now being superseded by the degree theory. Cf. Cross, F. L., in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1932.

attitude towards members of other non-Catholic bodies, an attitude which expresses itself in the denial of the priestly character of their ministry and the refusal of intercommunion.

Thus we have the singular fact that in his own church the Anglo-Catholic is a protestant, though his protest is in the name of Catholicism against whatever is Protestant.

To understand how he comes to occupy this anomalous position we must go back for a hundred years and recall the situation in the Church of England when Newman wrote his famous Tract 90, from which Anglo-Catholics date the beginning of their movement. The story is a familiar one and only the salient points need to be recalled. By the beginning of the last century the Church of England had reached a degree of secularization which it is difficult for those who know it only as it is today to realize. Its ministry was largely non-resident, its high ecclesiastics many of them courtiers and pluralists. The church's services were perfunctory and often irreverent, the clergy ignorant, the needs of the poor largely ignored. Of social passion such as we know it today there was, save in the case of a few individuals, little trace. Even personal piety was the concern of but few.

In his Essay on John Keble, Newman has painted an unforgettable picture of the evils against which the new movement came as a protest. He speaks of "a ritual dashed upon the ground, trodden on, and broken piecemeal; . . . vestments chucked off, lights

quenched, jewels stolen, the pomp and circumstances of worship annihilated; a dreariness which could be felt, and which seemed the token of an incipient Socinianism, forcing itself upon the eye, the ear, the nostrils of the worshipper; a smell of dust and damp, not of incense; a sound of ministers preaching Catholic prayers, and parish clerks groaning out Catholic canticles; the royal arms for the crucifix; huge ugly boxes of wood, sacred to preachers, frowning on the congregation in the place of the mysterious altar; and long cathedral aisles unused, railed off, like the tombs (as they were) of what had been and was not; and for orthodoxy, a frigid, inelastic, inconsistent, dull, helpless dogmatic, which could give no just account of itself, yet was intolerant of all teaching which contained a doctrine more or a doctrine less, and resented every attempt to give it a meaning."<sup>15</sup>

Even across a century we can still feel the passion that sent these words, biting and stinging, from Newman's pen.

What a contrast the years have brought! Many things there are still no doubt to criticize in the Church of England. At least no one can say that any such description applies to her today. And if we ask what has brought about the change, while many different factors have no doubt contributed their part, most sober students of history would agree that first place belongs to the movement which calls itself Anglo-Catholic.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, N. P., and Harris, Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

Central in the movement is its reviving church consciousness. To the Anglo-Catholic the church, and by the church he means the visible church, with its ministry, its doctrines, its ritual, its sacraments, and its discipline, is the authorized mediator between God and man. It is to be approached therefore with reverence and served with loyalty.

Many different emphases have emerged in the course of the century and not a few internal contrasts have developed. The churchly consciousness remains central. The church to the Anglo-Catholic is not a human society which one can join if one will and, having joined, can modify as one pleases. It is a divine creation to be received with thankfulness and to be obeyed with submission.

So far as the general type of his thought and life is concerned the Anglo-Catholic approximates more closely to the Orthodox than to the Roman type. His view of the church is federal rather than imperialistic. He limits ecclesiastical tradition to the creeds and theology of the undivided church. He gives central place to the sacraments in his worship and the type of piety he cultivates is of the mystical order.

At the same time there are clearly marked differences. The piety of the Anglo-Catholic has an ethical emphasis not found to the same degree in Orthodoxy, and he is conscious to a greater extent of the church's social responsibility. In the cultivation of the spiritual life he follows Roman rather than Eastern models. At no point is the difference be-

tween the Anglo-Catholic and the Orthodox more marked than in the extent to which the former is eager to re-establish relations with Rome and unwilling to do anything which may make the step of reunion with that church more difficult. For this reason he holds aloof from co-operation with Protestants at points where the Orthodox welcome it. So much is this the case that there is no one with whom those who are working for the reunion of Christendom find it more difficult to co-operate than with the Anglo-Catholic.

Within the Anglo-Catholic group there are wide differences of thought and of experience. There are men who are conservative in their theology and there are advanced liberals, men who are social radicals and those who are believers in the *status quo*, men who insist upon uniformity of worship and those who would grant a large measure of liberty. What unites them is a vivid consciousness of God's presence in his church, a conviction that that church has a social responsibility of world-wide importance, the insight that that responsibility can only be discharged by men and women who have fitted themselves for its discharge by a rigorous discipline, and the willingness for themselves to submit to that discipline, cost what it may.<sup>16</sup>

These then are the chief forms of non-Roman Catholicism: the Catholicism of the Orthodox, of the Old Catholics, and of the Anglo-Catholics. Hitherto

<sup>16</sup> An interesting account of this difference of tendencies is given by H. L. Stewart in his book *A Century of Anglo-Catholi-*

they have developed in relative isolation. Today they have become conscious of their similarities and of their relationships and are taking definite steps to explore the first and to regularize the second. Out of these contacts we see emerging a type of Christianity which is neither Roman nor Protestant, but which has points of similarity with both. One need not be a prophet to foresee that in the shaping of the church of the future this mediating type will have an important rôle to play.<sup>17</sup> What that rôle is to be we can forecast more intelligently only when we have studied Protestant Christianity and tried to live ourselves into its peculiar spirit and genius.

<sup>17</sup> Visser 't Hooft, W. A., *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy* (London, 1933).



*PART III*  
*CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM*

CHAPTER IX

PROTESTANTISM AS A FORM OF CHURCHLY  
RELIGION

1. What It Means to Be a Protestant.
2. Where Protestantism Broke with Rome.
3. The Types of Historic Protestantism.
4. Factors Making for Change.
5. How Present-day Protestantism Differs from the  
Protestantism of the Reformers.



*Protestantism began as a protest against certain admitted evils in the Church of Rome. It has continued as an independent form of Christianity because it has furnished the medium of social expression for a type of Christian faith and experience which differs in significant ways not only from that of Rome, but from Catholic piety in all its forms. These differences have to do partly with the view of religious authority, partly with the nature of the religious ideal. In contrast to the view which places final authority in the church and, in the last analysis in the Pope, Protestantism finds its supreme authority in the Spirit of God speaking to the individual conscience through the Bible. In contrast to the view which admits a double standard, one for the religious, the other for the ordinary Christian, Protestantism insists upon a single standard for all Christians, and so breaks once for all with the monastic ideal.*

*Yet Protestantism, too, is a form of churchly religion. Protestants no less than Catholics believe in the divine significance of the church and affirm its unity in spite of all outward separation. The difference between the older and the newer Protestantism consists in the fact that whereas the older Protestants believed that this unity required substantial uniformity of belief and government and so tried as far as possible to suppress or discredit all variant types, modern Protestants make large room for differences of interpretation and believe that the unity of the church may be consistent with the existence of a number of parallel autonomous administrative units. Such an autonomous unit within the larger whole is a denomination.*

## 1. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PROTESTANT

If it is not easy to describe a Catholic, how much more difficult it is to define a Protestant. Catholicism, whatever varieties it may include, has at least definite historic embodiments and means of expression. Protestantism meets us in a hundred different forms and as a spirit which refuses to be confined within any form.

If indeed we were content to identify Protestantism with pure individualism, our task would be simplified. Catholics are often tempted to do this. Recently I came upon a paragraph from an American Anglo-Catholic which makes this identification in such an unqualified way that I may quote it here:

"There is a fundamental principle of Protestantism," he writes, "as these other (*i.e.*, the non-Episcopal) churches hold it which seems to me unsound and may make of any Protestant minister a possible purveyor of a defective and emasculated Christianity. That unsound principle is this: that in matters of religion there is and can be no authority save the authority resident in the individual soul of a Christian believer—that only that is true which happens to appeal to you or me personally, individually [as] true. In consequence upon this principle every true thorough-going Protestant is at liberty to believe

anything and teach anything which he himself happens to think correct and to disbelieve anything and fail to teach anything which he does not happen to like. When we listen to a Protestant minister preach, it is the minister himself who is the authority. It is one man talking on the basis of one man's understanding."<sup>1</sup>

Now whatever may be true of certain Protestants, taken as a description of Protestantism in general this is the very reverse of the truth. Whatever else Protestantism may or may not be, it is a churchly religion. What the Reformers rejected when they broke with Rome was not the church, but what they believed to be the wrong kind of church; what they protested against was not authority, but the wrong kind of authority.

What was true at the beginning has been true ever since. The Protestant now, as then, is a churchman, and this means that he cannot be a pure individualist. Like the Catholic, he may use his reason to decide to what church he will belong and what authority he will accept (as the Catholic tells us every good Catholic must do). But when he has done this, he has in so far forth limited his freedom. All the greater Protestant churches have their constitutions legally defined and voluntarily accepted. All the greater Protestant churches have their rules defining the minister's duties and imposing penalties for their non-performance. Let a Protestant minister in any

<sup>1</sup> Bell, Bernard Iddings, in *The Christian Century*, October 4, 1933, p. 1233.

of the larger Protestant denominations act as Doctor Bell says all Protestant ministers act, and he will very soon find himself in difficulty. A church has more than one way of enforcing its laws, and ways of dealing with heretics have been found even in those branches of the church whose creed is that a church can have no creed but the Bible.

Of all Protestant denominations save perhaps the Friends, the Baptists have stressed the direct responsibility of the individual to God in the most emphatic way. They reject infant baptism because in their conception baptism is the outward recognition of an act of personal faith which is impossible without a certain degree of intellectual maturity. Yet the Baptists are the best witness to our contention that Protestantism is a churchly religion. When a man has faith in God, he is no longer an isolated individual. By that very act he becomes a member of the Christian fellowship, responsible with his fellow-Christians for a corporate as well as an individual witness. The Baptist, no less than the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian, is a churchman. Only in his case the basic social unit he recognizes is the local congregation and the church universal is the fellowship which is composed of the members of all the congregations that have confessed Christ and have consecrated their lives to his service. So strongly indeed do the Baptists emphasize the dependence of the individual upon the congregation for a full Christian life that, unlike some other branches of the church they deny the possibility of a valid celebration of the

communion except in the presence of the local congregation.<sup>2</sup>

To answer our question: What is a Protestant? we must ask: To what kind of a church does the Protestant belong and to what authority does he give allegiance? We shall be helped to an answer by recalling how Protestantism as a distinctive type of churchmanship first came to be.

## 2. WHERE PROTESTANTISM BROKE WITH ROME

The name itself points to the answer. Protestantism began as a protest against certain admitted evils in the Church of Rome. Those evils were of two kinds: those which were the result of an abuse of the church's authority and those which grew out of a defective conception of the church's piety.

The point at which the break came was the sale of indulgences. Every one knows the story of Tetzels and his reputed saying: "When the money clinks in the pardoner's box the soul flies out of purgatory." Whether true or not, it calls attention to an abuse which by the beginning of the sixteenth century had reached the proportions of a scandal. An indulgence

<sup>2</sup> When the Federal Council met in Rochester several years ago and it was decided to hold a celebration of the Holy Communion, the only way in which this could be done under conditions in which the Baptists could join was that the local Baptist Congregation in whose church the Council was meeting should invite ministers of the other communions to join with them in a joint celebration. A more extreme example is that of the Southern Baptists, who refused to allow their chaplains to expend any part of the funds assigned to them for war service in the purchase of a communion service on the ground that it was impossible to administer a valid communion without the presence of the local congregation. *War-Time Agencies of the Churches* (New York, 1919), p. 21.

in Roman theory, as we have seen, is not a license to commit sin. It is not even a promise that in any specific case sins will be forgiven. It is the remission, on the performance of certain prescribed conditions, easier than those required by the ordinary canonical discipline,<sup>3</sup> of all or a part of the temporal punishment of sin committed up to date. Among these conditions, in Luther's day, was the making of money payments to the church, and it is easy to see to what abuses, in the hands of a clever salesman, this device for filling the coffers of a needy church might be applied.

The indulgence was only one example of a type of abuse which was rife at the time. The church was not only needy; it was greedy, and not very scrupulous as to the agents it employed or the methods they followed in their attempt to replenish the empty treasury.

These evils weighed heavily on the conscience of good Catholics. Council after Council had been called to deal with them. They had met, passed the appropriate resolutions, and gone their way. But the abuses continued as before. The protest of the "little monk of Wittenberg" seemed to the authorities of the day only the latest in a long series with which they well knew how to deal.

So it might have proved if the protest against indulgences had been all there was to it. But another element entered into Luther's action which gave it a more far-reaching significance, and that was its chal-

<sup>3</sup> Technically an indulgence is the substitution of an easier for a more severe penance.

lence of the type of piety of which the sale of indulgences was only a conspicuous by-product.

Luther was a monk and, as he himself tells us, one who took the monastic discipline seriously. It was concern for his soul's salvation which had led him to abandon the world for the cloister and that concern made him meticulous in the fulfilment of all his appointed duties. "If ever a monk could have been saved by his monkery," he tells us, "that monk was I." But the penances he practised and the austerities he underwent brought him no peace. On the contrary they made him but more conscious of the imperfection within. Like St. Paul he found two men within him struggling for the mastery, and do what he would the baser had the upper hand.

Then it was that to Luther there came the insight which showed him that he was on the wrong track. It was through a word of the Apostle Paul that the revelation came: "The just shall live by faith." Luther perceived that all his striving availed him nothing. There was another way, a simpler way: the way of trust which Paul had discovered; the way of which Jesus had spoken; the way of the child that does not earn or deserve, but simply receives and is thankful.

Like all simple insights this was far-reaching in its consequences. It substituted for the elaborate machinery of penance and satisfaction the single principle of faith; and with the substitution rendered unnecessary not only the elaborate rules of the monastic discipline, but even the basic difference between priesthood and laity. If simple faith was all that was

needed for salvation, then every one who had faith could be his own priest, and direct access to God became possible for every sincere and penitent spirit.

Luther's protest was not merely against the abuses which had grown up about the church's piety, but against the prevailing conception of that piety itself. And this made it serious.

How serious, neither Luther himself nor his adversaries at first realized. The last thing of which he dreamed was a break with the church. He was himself a loyal servant of the church and believed he was doing what all her earnest sons and daughters would approve. It was only after his appeal to the Pope had proved fruitless and he faced the choice between submission and revolt that the issue became clear. That issue, it now became apparent, had to do with no less a question than the seat of authority in religion, whether that authority was that of a legal institution functioning through divinely appointed officials authorized to act as God's representatives and spokesmen or that of God's free Spirit speaking directly to each individual through his revelation once for all given in the Bible.

It is not necessary to follow the steps in detail. The story has been told again and again. The appeal from Pope to Council was one step. Then the discovery that councils too might err, that in fact in condemning John Huss a council had erred. The break with the monastic ideal was another and even more radical step. When Luther the monk married Catherine the nun, he committed what was to the



pious of his time the unpardonable sin; but he set a precedent which has been determinative for Protestantism ever since. Protestantism has never had a celibate clergy. In the new parishes which soon sprang up the marriage of the ministry became the rule.

In all this Luther believed himself to be acting as a good churchman. If the reforms he advocated were radical, they were reforms which were involved in the very nature of Christianity as he understood it. When the Council failed him as authority he turned to the Bible, but to the Bible as a living book, interpreted to each generation by the same Spirit which had originally inspired it. Reformed religion became Biblical religion; and the Bible, hitherto reserved for scholars and theologians, was translated into the vernacular and made accessible to the common people. Early Protestant theology was theology for laymen. It consisted of short propositions about matters that could be verified in personal experience: sin and salvation and the nature of the church. Melancthon, the first theologian of the Reformation, called his textbook *Loci Communes*, or as we might render it, *The Main Points*.<sup>4</sup> It was designed to set forth in simple language the central teaching of Scripture, the points that any earnest spirit if he set about it might find out for himself. It was an appeal from the church of today to the church of the first disciples.

This interest in maintaining the continuity of Christian teaching continued in the second genera-

<sup>4</sup> First Edition 1521, second edition 1535.

tion. Calvin, the systematic theologian of Protestantism, while basing his system upon the Bible, makes constant appeal to the fathers and devotes more than half of his treatise to the church. It is the purpose of the *Institutes* to show what is the nature of the church which Christ came to found, the church which Paul calls the "body of Christ," and which to Calvin no less than to Augustine and Aquinas is the mother of the saints.

Against the will of its authors as it were the new church came to be. Its birth was made easy by the rising spirit of nationalism which, breaking the unity of Europe into parts, made the creation of new forms possible in the church and in the state. The development followed different lines in different countries. In Germany the adherence of the Elector of Saxony to the new religion made a close connection with the state natural. In Switzerland, where the Reformed type was strongest, the church claimed, at least in moral matters, to control the state. In Geneva, Calvin and his theological associates were for a time the supreme authority and tried with a courage and consistency not elsewhere attempted in sixteenth century Protestantism to make God's word the standard for civic as well as for individual life. The position of Knox in Scotland was similar. In England the change was less drastic and after the break with Rome the framework of the old church was left intact to carry on through its newly appointed bishops the tradition of a reformed Catholicism.

### 3. THE TYPES OF HISTORIC PROTESTANTISM

As the Protestant churches grew in strength and in the numbers of their adherents they developed, as independent organizations tend to do, a self-consciousness of their own. Freed from the fear of external compulsion, they began to develop internal differences, and in the course of time a number of contrasted types emerged which have interesting points of similarity to parallel types in the Catholic churches. Some of these owe their origin to factors in the historic situation. Others are the reflection of differences in the character of the religious experience.

There is in the first place the contrast between the Lutheran and the Calvinistic, or Reformed type of Protestantism. Lutheran piety has been on the whole of the quietistic sort, content to limit the church's responsibility to that of witness to God's revelation once for all delivered. Whether it was that Luther, in spite of his leaving the cloister, carried with him some traces of the monastic ideal, or whether there is in the Germanic peoples among whom Lutheranism has found its chief home a quality of inwardness which the Anglo-Saxon lacks, the fact remains that Lutheran piety has been on the whole of an introspective rather than of an active type. More other-worldly than Calvinism, more ready to find its satisfaction within, it has been content to leave the regulation of outward matters to the state and to reserve

for the church the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments.

Calvinism on the other hand, wherever we find it, in Germany, in France, in Scotland, in Holland, and in the new lands across the sea, has been of a more active type. It has served not only as the inspirer of the individual, but as the critic of the state. When kings have done wrong and parliaments have gone astray, there has been some Presbyterian preacher to remind them of the fact and to repeat in language appropriate to the historic situation the messages of Amos and of Micah. Nor have the Calvinistic churches been content with words. They have followed what they have said with appropriate action. If they have had no bishops, they have had presbyteries; and every pastor has been conscious that in a very literal sense he was a minister by divine authority. So in the Calvinistic churches the disciplinary function of the church has been revived and the ideal of a church whose members should be holy has been held aloft.

Anglicanism has qualities in common with both types, as indeed we should expect from its history. In its liturgy it has been the guardian of the sacramental tradition; in its doctrine it has been prevailingly Calvinistic.<sup>5</sup> More tolerant and comprehensive in its

<sup>5</sup> At least during its earlier period. It is an interesting fact, often forgotten today, that the most uncompromising statement of the doctrine of double predestination, the Lambeth Articles of 1595, was composed by an Anglican Archbishop, Whitgift, and was only prevented from becoming the law of the Church of England by the veto of Queen Elizabeth. Later, like other Calvinistic bodies, the Church of England developed Arminian tendencies, until today we find Anglicans like the present Bishop of Gloucester, who tell us that the Englishman is by nature a semi-Pelagian.

practice than either Lutheranism or Calvinism, it has aspired to be, and at times has succeeded in being, the church of the nation. Yet it has achieved its comprehensiveness at a price, the price of the unity and consistency which characterizes both the Lutheran and the Calvinistic types. In the Anglican Church, and the Anglican Church alone, men who are genuinely Protestant and men who are consistently Catholic have been able to find a home side by side.

Different from all three, not only in its form of government but in the quality of its religious life, is the group which constitutes the left wing of Protestantism—the extreme Independents of the Congregational and Baptist types. Here, and here alone, we find Protestants who may with some plausibility be called individualists; for here alone we find the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers carried to its logical consequence. To the Protestant of this type the church is a purely spiritual society, composed of redeemed individuals; and the forms of organization they may adopt, or indeed whether they shall adopt any at all, is purely a matter of convenience.

Even here, as we have seen, there are limits to the individualistic principle and in the existence of the local congregation, with its ministry of the Word and sacraments, we have a point of contact with other Protestants whose conception of the church is Presbyterian or Episcopalian. Indeed it may be said that the Congregationalists, just because of the importance they give to individual faith, find it easier to

realize the unity of the church across all ecclesiastical barriers than do the members of the more highly organized churches.

In the course of the later history other types have developed which differ in definite respects from all of these and, within the older bodies new cleavages have appeared. Some of these owe their origin to accidents of history, like a persecution or a migration; others to a difference in Biblical interpretation; still others to the influence of some forceful personality. Such a group are the Baptists who early separated from the other Independents because of their view of baptism as the evidence and expression of conversion. Such a group are the Methodists, who, beginning as a reforming movement in the Church of England, have now become a separate denomination, or rather family of denominations numbering many million members. Such a group are the Friends, who carry their emphasis upon the spiritual character of the church so far as to be suspicious of all outward forms of organization and in an age where the individual finds it increasingly difficult to resist the pressure for conformity, remain as a perpetual reminder of the simplicity of primitive Christianity. Such a group are the Unitarians, who, parting company with their more conservative fellow-Christians on the doctrine of the Trinity, carry the critical spirit further than any other Christian body, so far indeed that in the United States they have been unwilling to restrict their fellowship to those who desire to be known as Christians or even as theists.

Some idea of the number and of the wide ramifications of these inner Protestant divisions may be gained from the fact that according to the *1926 Census of Religious Bodies* there were in the United States at that time no less than 200 independent and self-governing churches.<sup>6</sup> Some of these are Episcopal in their form of government, others Presbyterian, others Congregational. It belongs to the freedom of the Protestant spirit that it is not committed to any uniform system of government, but has found itself at home in institutions of the most widely different kind.

#### 4. FACTORS MAKING FOR CHANGE

This extraordinary diversity in the forms of modern Protestantism would have surprised no one more than the Reformers. If one could imagine Martin Luther after awaking from a Rip Van Winkle sleep of four centuries, plunged without warning into our modern world, two things about our contemporary religious life would amaze him. One would be the fact that there were so many Protestant denominations; the other the fact that it seemed to surprise no one that this should be so. There was only one reason which in Luther's view justified a breach with

<sup>6</sup> To give an account of the varieties of American Protestants which in the course of time have emerged would carry us too far. Full information concerning all of these is given in convenient form in the descriptive portions of the *United States Census for Religious Bodies* for 1926. For Continental Protestantism a convenient source of information is the book by F. Siegmund-Schultze entitled *Ekklesia* (Gotha, 1934-1935), in which an account is given of the more important forms of Christian thought and life to be found in the contemporary church.

the church of the day and that was the fact that it had denied the Gospel. There was only one substitute which had the right to replace such a church, and that was a church which affirmed the Gospel. That there might be heretical bodies besides the church and outside it, Luther could understand. That there should be more than one church would have been unthinkable to him.

It would not be so much the number of our Protestant denominations that would surprise Luther as the fact that no one else seemed to be surprised. That there should exist side by side different and often inconsistent forms of Christianity claiming recognition as churches and according such recognition to others would seem to him a contradiction in terms.

How then shall we explain this extraordinary transformation? How did the one church of which the Reformers dreamed become the many?

One of the most important factors we have already mentioned, the rising spirit of nationalism. Where there were different nations, each sovereign within its own territory, it seemed natural that the organization of the church should follow national lines. As the Orthodox Church has its self-governing units under the headship of Constantinople, of Jerusalem, of Alexandria, and of Antioch, each recognizing the priesthood of the others and practising intercommunion; so it seemed to Protestants fitting that there should be a French Church, a German Church, and an English Church, each with independent jurisdiction and government, yet recognizing the



others as parts of the one church of Christ and with ministry, doctrine, and sacraments acknowledged by all. And this has been in fact the situation in certain countries and for certain periods.<sup>7</sup>

A more serious factor was the emergence within Protestantism of the same critical and reforming spirit which had caused the break with Rome. Not all Protestants interpreted the Bible alike or understood the creed in the same way. These differences in turn gave birth within each country to rival schools of thought and life, each of which in turn developed its own organization. These separate and parallel organizations became inevitable because within each branch of the church the dominant teaching tended to harden into a rigid and uncompromising orthodoxy, an orthodoxy which identified its own understanding of the Bible with the truth of God and therefore refused to make any place in the church for varying types.

In revolt against this uncompromising and persecuting churchmanship, independent spirits reacted with equal vehemence. An intolerant orthodoxy was answered by a militant radicalism. In many countries and in many branches of the church small groups

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Robbins, Howard Chandler, *The General Convention of 1934*, A Sermon Preached in St. Bartholomew's Church in the City of New York on November 4, 1934, p. 12:

"After the Reformation, the English Church and the Reformed Churches of the continent 'mutually recognized each other as sisters.' And under the Subscription Act of 1571, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, non-episcopally ordained clergy were permitted to preach and even to hold benefices in the Church of England. Bishop Bramhall, a High Churchman, repudiated the notion that the Protestant Churches of the continent were not sister churches. Bishop Andrewes, speaking of episcopacy, said: 'He is blind who doth not see Churches consisting without it.'"

broke away from the larger bodies, each following some trusted leader or affirming some cherished doctrine. Even those who would gladly have remained in the church were often obliged to leave it. To this day Methodism remains the outstanding example of the divisive effect of a narrow churchmanship.<sup>8</sup>

At the heart of both positions, the conservative and the radical alike, there was a common assumption. This was the conviction shared by the Reformers with their predecessors in the mother church that in matters of religious faith the unity which was the result of the Spirit's witness involved uniformity. It was assumed that all who were taught of that Spirit would think alike. If they did not, then one or the other must be self-deceived. Luther broke with Zwingli because they differed in their view of the sacrament, and Calvin consented to the burning of Servetus because Servetus held erroneous views of the Trinity.

Thus there was introduced into the heart of Protestantism a fundamental inconsistency, the inconsistency between a theory that affirmed the duty of the individual Christian to think for himself and a practice which denied it. In criticizing his church when it seemed to him to depart from the teaching

<sup>8</sup> In his great book, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Church* (New York, 1931), Troeltsch has called attention to the divisive effect of the attempt to enforce a too rigid uniformity. He distinguishes between two types of social Christianity: what he calls the church type and the sect type, the church type being more tolerant in its attitude toward individual failing, provided the authority of the church as a whole is recognized, the sect type insisting not only upon uniformity of doctrine but upon consistency of life.

of the Bible, the individual church member was doing what the creed of his church told him he ought to do. Yet so long as that church made church membership dependent upon the holding of a uniform system of doctrine, such criticism presented the church with an insoluble problem. Where exactly was the point at which conformity ceased to be a duty and differing views became admissible within the church? That there was such a range of permissible variation all Protestants admitted. Luther used large liberty in his interpretation of Scripture and more than two centuries later the American Presbyterians, in adopting their form of government in 1788, put on record their conviction that while "they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as teachers, be sound in the faith; they also believe that there are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these they think it the duty both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other."<sup>9</sup>

But how was one to tell just which they were? In Catholicism there were ways of determining the limits of admitted difference and of dealing with an offender when he had gone wrong. But Protestantism had no such generally accepted method and for lack of a better alternative fell back upon the method of the older church, with its heresy trials and its resulting excommunications.

<sup>9</sup> *The Confession of Faith in The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1895), Book I, Of Government, Chap. I, Preliminary Principles, Sec. V, p. 283.

One further factor contributed its share to the growing disintegration of Protestantism. This was the adventurous spirit which sent explorers to the new world which the voyagers of the fifteenth century had added to the map. These brought with them the type of religion in which they had been brought up at home. Often indeed it was the desire for freedom to practice that religion which was the motive of their migration. The divisions which the Old World knew were perpetuated in the new and in due time were succeeded by others of native origin. Nowhere were there to be found within an area of similar size so many different kinds of Protestantism as in Colonial America.

There grew up on the new continent a new nation peopled by men of many races and of many nationalities, and to teach his own brand of Protestantism was dear. There was not only a Lutheran Church in America, but a German Lutheran Church, and a Swedish, and a Norwegian. There was not only a Reformed Church, but a Dutch Reformed Church and a German Reformed Church, and each particular Lutheran or member of the Reformed Church held loyalty to the faith in which he had been brought up as a sacred duty.

##### 5. HOW PRESENT-DAY PROTESTANTISM DIFFERS FROM THE PROTESTANTISM OF THE REFORMERS

All these influences, potent as they were, account only for the outward divisions of Protestantism.

They do not explain that inner transformation which to our Luther *redivivus* would have seemed most surprising—the tolerant spirit which has renounced the ideal of uniformity and substituted for the conception of a single type of thought and life to which all true Christians must conform the conception of a family of churches, each with its own type of life and doctrine, yet recognizing the right of the others to a place with itself in the one all-embracing Christian Church.

Two influences have contributed to this growing spirit of toleration, a spirit which in quiet but none the less irresistible ways has been transforming the separate branches of Protestantism. One is the application of the scientific spirit to the study of religion, the other the sense of comradeship which grows inevitably out of association in a common task.

If one were to choose out of the many factors which have gone into the making of the new world in which we are living today the one which has been most revolutionary in its influence, there would be general agreement that that factor is the rise and growing dominance of the scientific spirit. Among the areas where the revolutionary effects of this new approach has made itself felt, religion is one of the most conspicuous. The application of the scientific method to the study of religion has not only revealed to each of the separate Protestant bodies unsuspected weaknesses in its own position but has brought out into clear light the points which all have in common. So the consciousness of a common Christianity, weak-

ened for the moment by the divisive influences we have enumerated, has been making itself felt in all branches of the church.

No less far-reaching in its effects has been the sense of comradeship which grows out of association in a common task. Early Protestantism was on the whole narrow in its outlook. The Reformers were content to make God's will prevail in the limited area they could control. What happened to men of other nations or countries was God's concern, not theirs. It was the Catholic Church which first felt the call to a world-wide mission and sent Xavier and his fellow-adventurers to the ends of the earth.

As the Protestant churches grew strong and, sure of themselves, no longer needed to fight for existence, their horizon widened. They too caught the world-vision and consecrated themselves to the missionary task. Later in time in its beginnings, the story of Protestant missions is not less glorious than that of Catholic missions and the reflex influence upon the life of the church has been even greater.

The expansion of the Protestant horizon was not merely geographical. It took in new aspects of the life at home. Christian love, originally given an almost wholly individualistic interpretation, was re-defined in terms of the social gospel. In theory Protestantism had always contended for the sanctity of all life and for a gospel equally valid for every day of the week. Now the consequences of that theory were drawn for practice and the churches began to take their social mission more seriously. Here too

the separated Protestant bodies found a new point of contact. Walter Rauschenbusch was a Baptist, but his *Christianity and the Social Crisis*<sup>10</sup> found readers in all the churches. *The Social Ideals of the Churches*,<sup>11</sup> the most comprehensive statement of the social program for the church thus far adopted by American Protestants was originally put forth by the Methodist General Convention in 1908, but within a year it was reaffirmed with slight changes by the Federal Council and has become the most authoritative statement of the social ideals of contemporary Protestantism.<sup>12</sup>

Under the influence of these new conditions, intellectual and practical, we find the attitude of the different Protestant bodies insensibly altering. At first rivals, often jealous rivals, the Protestants of America have come at last to recognize their common heritage as Christians and to grant to others (as

<sup>10</sup> (New York, 1919).

<sup>11</sup> New and Revised Edition as Passed by the Quadrennial Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches at Indianapolis, Dec. 8, 1932. (New York, 1933.)

<sup>12</sup> It is no doubt easy to overestimate the significance of this statement. At most it represents an aspiration rather than a definite program, and even in this more modest sense there are many Protestants who would not accept its underlying philosophy. As civil institutions the churches are themselves part of the present economic order and it is difficult for their members, most of all their lay members, to look upon that order with complete detachment. Through its investments, corporate and individual, Protestants have given hostages to fortune, which make the thought of radical reconstruction, to say the least, disturbing.

Yet when all qualifications have been made the fact remains that modern Christians, whether Protestant or Catholic, are less at ease within the existing economic system than their predecessors, and that even when they do not see their way clear in detail, they recognize the need of social change to an extent which was not characteristic of the older church.

their fellow-Christians in Britain and on the Continent are beginning to do) the same privileges which they claim for themselves. So that characteristic phenomenon we call a denomination has come to birth in Protestantism, a body having all the characteristics and accepting all the responsibilities of the church as a whole, yet existing side by side with other similar bodies within the same territory without any official determination of the relation which each should hold to the others.

We face in the case of Protestantism the same problem which confronted us in our study of Catholicism—the problem of defining the nature of that inner unity which, in spite of their outward differences, makes the Protestants of different names feel their kinship with one another. And we must find our answer, not primarily in uniformity of belief or practice, but in a quality of the inner life—a type of piety which, while Christian, is at the same time Protestant.





*PART III (CONTINUED)*

*CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM*

CHAPTER X

THE GENIUS OF PROTESTANT PIETY

1. What Protestants Have in Common.
2. Characteristics of Protestant Piety.
3. The Place of the Church in Protestant Piety.
4. In What Sense a Protestant Is an Individualist.
5. What the World Owes to the Protestant Spirit.

*To understand the genius of Protestant piety we must contrast it with Catholic piety, both the mystical type which has its most consistent expression in Orthodoxy and the legalistic type which has its characteristic development in Rome.*

*The goal of mystical piety is to be rid of mortality and finiteness through the acquisition of a new immortal nature, and the method is immediate contact with the Divine either through an act of intuition in prayer or through participation in the sacraments. In contrast to this the Protestant asserts that man needs no change of nature, but only a change of relation. This change is brought about by faith through which, responding to God's offer of free forgiveness, the penitent sinner not only finds assurance and peace, but inspiration for the life of love.*

*The goal of legalistic piety is the acquisition of merit through the performance of good works, either to secure the remission of temporal punishment due to one's sin or, in the case of the saints, to assist others to a like remission through the transfer of supererogatory merit. In contrast to this, the Protestant maintains that since, by Christ's Atonement, God has provided a salvation sufficient for all, there remains no place for human merit, and all the elaborate machinery of penance and indulgences is swept away. One thing only is necessary—to hear God's word and obey. Such trust, such obedience, God himself makes possible.*

## 1. WHAT PROTESTANTS HAVE IN COMMON

In our attempt to understand the genius of Catholic piety we found it necessary for the moment to forget much that was perplexing and even repellent in its outward manifestations in order to concentrate our attention upon the inner spirit which alone gives it life. Such concentration and detachment is even more necessary in the study of Protestant piety. For here too we find much in the forms of contemporary Protestantism that seems difficult to reconcile with our description of the Protestant ideal. The Protestant, we have seen, is a churchman; and the church in which he believes is for him, no less than for the Catholic, one, holy, apostolic, and catholic. Indeed it is his effort to take the apostolicity of the church seriously which has led him to break with what he believes to be the imperfect and corrupt form in which it meets him in contemporary Catholicism.

When we study existing Protestantism, we find it difficult to reconcile the ideal we have pictured with the facts as they are. Instead of one church we see many; instead of a holy church, one made up of imperfect men and women; instead of a church that reproduces in its life the primitive simplicity of the Apostles, one that in many respects has made its terms with the world; instead of a church which is catholic in the sense of being universal, one which

includes only a minority of professing Christians.

All the more necessary is it for us to turn our thoughts for the moment from the imperfection of the men and women who are its representatives and to fix our attention upon the ideal which gives its distinctive character to Protestant piety.

In our study of the points at which the first Protestants broke with Rome, we saw that they were two in number. One had to do with the conception of authority in religion, the other with the nature of the Christian life. These contrasts still continue. They mark the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism in all its forms, and between them they determine the character of Protestant piety.

Rome, as we have seen, places authority in the Pope, the Orthodox in the General Council, whereas Protestantism finds its ultimate authority in the Bible—but not in the Bible considered as a law book, to which one goes for proof texts. That is a view which has often been held by Protestants. But it was not the view of the Reformers or of the classics in which they have defined their position. The true authority for Protestantism, as for Catholicism, is God speaking to and through his church. But this church, as the Protestant conceives it, consists of all those believing spirits who, trusting in God for their salvation, turn back to the book which God has given them for their guidance for the new light which may yet break forth from the word of God. Protestantism, I repeat, is a churchly religion; and the Bible is not a substitute for the church, but the book which tells

us what the true church is like and supplies the inspiration for the transformation of life through which alone that true church can be realized.

A second point at which the Reformers broke with Rome had to do with the conception of the Christian life. Rome taught that in order to enter upon the Christian life one must do (or have done for one) certain things (ceremonial and moral) that make possible the acquisition of a new nature. The Reformers affirmed that the way to enter upon the Christian life was through an act of personal trust that altered one's relationship to God. This contrast was given theological expression in the doctrine of justification by faith.

The doctrine of justification by faith is a way of saying in technical language what Jesus said much more simply when he talked about the childlike spirit. It is the Protestant's way of affirming two things about the Christian life which together give it its distinctive quality: first, that it is so wonderful and divine that man can do nothing of himself to earn it, but must be content to take it as a gift; secondly, that it is so adapted to man's true nature that to enter upon it he requires no miraculous change of nature, but only an act of trust which is itself the gift of God.

We may illustrate the nature of this new life by contrasting it with two other conceptions of the Christian life which have played a great rôle in Catholic piety: the mystical conception of the Christian life as the acquisition of a new nature, and the legal-

istic conception of it as the achievement of an adequate degree of merit.

We have already considered the mystical ideal and seen how it dominates Catholic piety, both the ascetic type which is characteristic of the life of the saint and the more conventional type of the ordinary practising Catholic. In both the goal is the same. It is to be rid of mortality and finiteness by the acquisition of a new immortal nature. And in both the method is the same. It is immediate contact with the divine either through an act of intuition in prayer or through participation in the sacraments, to which in his goodness God has attached a certain mysterious yet life-giving quality.

In contrast to this the Protestant asserts that man needs no change of nature, but only a change of relation. Man is by nature finite, and the finite is incapable of becoming infinite. But man, though finite, need not remain apart from God, since God by his grace has opened a way to himself by forgiveness. It is sin, and sin alone, that stands between man and his maker. But God, who is love, has provided a way of escape for man by the sacrifice of Christ; and what man alone cannot do for himself, God has done for him. All that man needs to do is to trust and to repent; and through his trust and the assurance of forgiveness which it brings with it, he will find the motive for the new life which will issue in perfect holiness.

As the Protestant conception of the Christian life differs from the mystical conception of that life as

the deification of human nature, so it differs from the legalistic conception of it as the acquisition of merit through the performance of good works. The conception of merit, as we have seen, has a central place in Roman Catholic piety. It furnishes the standard by which man's progress in the Christian life is measured. And, while the saints by their mystic devotion may reach a place where they no longer need merit for themselves, this is not true of the great mass of their fellow-Christians. Indeed it is the crowning glory of the saint that by his works of supererogation he acquires merit which can be made available for others both in this life and in the life after death.

The conception of merit has no place in the Protestant form of religion. God deals with his redeemed not by law, but by grace. Since through Christ's atonement God has provided a salvation sufficient for all there remains no place for human merit, and all the elaborate machinery of penance and indulgence is swept away. One thing only is necessary: to hear God's word and to obey. And to him who hears and obeys all good things will be added. Such trust, such obedience, God himself makes possible. They are God's supreme gift to man and, like all God's gifts, need no human authentication. They shine by their own light.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that the Christian is under no

<sup>1</sup> The contrast between this conception and that which dominates official Roman piety appears most clearly in the tests by which the saint is recognized. For this Rome provides an elaborate ma-



obligation to do good works, but only that his motive for doing them is altered. He no longer does them to gain advantage for himself, but to express gratitude to God who has called him to holiness, and desires for him that he should perfectly realize the life of love.

The activity of the Protestant has its spring in the initial act of faith. The good works in which it issues are—to use the quaint language of the Westminster Confession of Faith, but “fruits and evidences” of that faith, ways in which “believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God whose workmanship they are.”<sup>2</sup>

In the later history this simple teaching has been obscured by many technicalities. The doctrine which was designed to deliver man from the law has itself been phrased in legal terms, and substitutionary theories of atonement and disputes concerning the nature and power of the will have reintroduced into Protestantism many of the subtleties against which

chinery. There are virtues to be attested and miracles to be approved, and for each there is an appropriate procedure. It must be shown that the saint possesses not only the secular virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and prudence, but the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; and by faith the Catholic means believing whatever the church teaches, and by charity doing whatever the church commands. So the miracles are such and such only as have been proved to be such by physicians chosen for the purpose. Nor is the hearing a one-sided one. The devil also must be given his due and his case is presented by the *advocatus diaboli*. Of all this elaborate process of measurement and testing, Protestantism knows nothing. Cf. Macken, Thomas F., *The Canonisation of Saints* (Dublin, 1910).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chap. XVI, Sec. II.

the Reformation was a protest. All the more important is it to hold fast the central issue, for it is by the attitude taken to this that one's position either as a Protestant or a Catholic is determined.

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROTESTANT PIETY

It is only in the light of this double contrast to the mystical ideal and to the legalistic that we can understand the genius of Protestant piety. For Protestantism too has its piety, to those who are fortunate enough to experience it, as intimate and satisfying as that which Catholics enjoy, but with a character and a quality of its own. Let us see if we can penetrate its secret.

In our study of Catholic piety we noted certain outstanding characteristics, such as its dependence upon physical media, its vivid sense of the reality and nearness of the heavenly world, its emphasis upon the contemplative life, and its acceptance of a different standard for the ordinary Christian from that which is required of the religious in the technical sense. We may use these as convenient points of comparison in our effort to define the genius of Protestant piety.

Catholic piety, as we have seen, is realistic,<sup>8</sup> often naïve. The Catholic finds God the Spirit mediated through physical objects, and the church is given

<sup>8</sup> I use the word to designate a view of reality which takes the objects presented to consciousness at their face value without critical inquiry as to the processes by which their presentation is mediated.

him to make the needed contact possible and easy. Hence Catholic religion, taken in the large, is sacramental religion.

The Protestant, on the other hand, is more critical in his attitude. He finds God in ideals which commend themselves to his conscience, and the church is given him as custodian and witness to these ideals. This function it fulfills by introducing him to the Bible, in whose pages God speaks directly to his conscience, communicating to him what he is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. Hence for the Protestant the Word takes precedence of the sacrament as God's chief means of grace. The Protestant too accepts the sacrament as God's gift to man, but not as a gift of a different kind. To him the sacrament is a form of the Word. It is the Word in action. Hence it has symbolic character. It is outward sign of inward and spiritual grace.

It follows that for the Protestant the mind has a place in mediating the divine life that it does not always have in Catholic piety. Catholic piety, as we have seen, is concrete, centring in physical objects. If one makes the needed contact in the world of sense, the part played by the intelligence may be for the moment negligible. Protestantism, on the other hand, makes much of right belief. Like Catholicism it makes heavy demands upon the will, but it approaches the will through the intellect. It asks of its devotees that they should understand as well as do.

This is only natural when we remember how Protestantism began. The reformer is almost always an

intellectual, often a scholar, always a thinker. Luther was a professor as well as a monk. Calvin was trained for the law. This intellectual interest stamped a character upon Protestant piety which it has retained ever since. It was a piety which was based upon the acceptance of definite belief and the ideal of the new church was to be one in which all men, even the simplest, should know the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

This accounts for the central place given to the Bible in Protestantism. In the Bible the revelation originally given through Jesus Christ in fulfilment of God's promise to patriarch and prophet is preserved in definite and authoritative form. But it becomes efficacious for man's salvation only as it is interpreted to the individual by the witness of the Holy Spirit and to the church as a whole through the consensus of those to whom in the good providence of God this witness has been vouchsafed. Hence the great importance of the sermon in Protestantism and in general of the teaching office. For in the sermon the truth in the Bible is applied to present-day conditions and the appeal is made to the will to translate it into life.

A second characteristic of Catholic piety is its other-worldly character. We have seen that the Cath-

<sup>4</sup> This intellectual emphasis has been obscured by Luther's attack upon philosophy and Calvin's depreciation of human reason. But what Luther and Calvin opposed was not the use of reason in its proper place but the technicalities of scholastic theology. The faith they would substitute was simpler, but it was none the less rational. Barth is therefore true to the genius of historic Protestantism when he insists that the most important of all the duties of the church is to preserve the purity of its witness.

olic lives in two worlds—this familiar world of space and time, of persons and things, in which all of us are living, but at the same time in another world no less real, no less accessible, no less substantial, to which the symbols of religion introduce him. This world—the home of God, of the angels and of the saints—though unseen, is everywhere present and the interests which centre in it transcend in importance the most precious goods that earth can provide.

The Protestant believes, too, in the existence of this unseen world. To him, as to the Catholic, personal immortality is an essential article of his creed. But that vivid sense of the nearness of the world to come is not so present in his consciousness as in that of the Catholic. God, to be sure, is Lord both of the living and of the dead, and in due time—if we are faithful and obedient—will introduce us into the home he has prepared. But for the present it is his will that we should live our life here, and the less we are diverted by thoughts of the unknown future the better. It follows that for the Protestant, in practice if not in theory, the centre of interest shifts from the future life to the present. It is not that Protestantism is unaware of the contrast between this life and the next or minimizes the transitory character of sense and of sex. It was not a Catholic, but a Protestant, who wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But that vivid consciousness of the dead as living, the sense of intimate fellowship which expresses itself in mutual helpfulness, is not present,

or, at least is not present in the same degree. The Protestant does not share the Catholic sense of the contemporaneousness of Heaven. He thinks of it as a place to which he is going by and by.

This negative attitude toward the heavenly world has its historic explanation as a protest against the abuses which had become associated with the veneration of the saints. But it had important consequences for Christian ethics. It tended to divert attention from the contemplative and to focus it upon the active virtues. In spite of death's constant reminder of the shortness of life here, and of the transitoriness of human possessions, it became easy for the Protestant to feel at home in this world and to find an increasing part of his satisfaction in developing its resources. In his well-known work, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*,<sup>5</sup> Professor R. H. Tawney has called attention to one of the unforeseen by-products of this emphasis upon the sanctity of the present life. Protestantism, he tells us, has given a divine sanction to the world of business. By broadening the doctrine of vocation it has brought commerce and industry within the horizon of religion and so contributed indirectly to the rise of capitalism. Where Catholicism said, "Give," Protestantism said "Save," that so you may be able to give more. How far this judgment is correct we need not here inquire. Enough that it reminds us of one of the outstanding characteristics of Protestant piety, its strong sense of the sacredness of the secular.

<sup>5</sup> (New York, 1926.)

It follows that Protestant piety taken in the large has had a predominantly ethical rather than an exclusively mystical character. By this is meant that the test by which growth in grace is measured is the development of virtues which find expression in the relation of the individual to his neighbor rather than in the purely contemplative graces which concentrate attention upon the immediate relation of the soul to God. Here again we must be on our guard against exaggeration. Protestantism has had its mystics, and its great mystics at that, while Catholics on their part have made much of good works and number among their saints many lovers and servants of their kind. But the service which the Catholic esteems most highly is that which helps a man to detach himself from this world that he may give himself unreservedly to the cultivation of the contemplative life, whereas the Protestant would have the saint serve God in this world that he may make that part of the world which he serves better.

This sense of the sacredness of all life and of the duty of the individual to witness for God in the place where God has set him finds its theological expression in the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. Protestants are often accused of subordinating the priestly to the prophetic function of the ministry. The reverse is true. The ministry of the prophet is important, and Protestants have rightly made much of it. But prophets are rare and not every one is called to that high office. Every Christian, however—so Protestants believe—should be a

priest, and by the witness of his faith and love mediate the divine life to his fellows.

Protestantism, even in its most democratic manifestations, has been aristocratic in essence, holding all its members to the highest ideal.<sup>6</sup> In its ethic it has been Puritan. It has made sainthood the goal for all and it has interpreted sainthood not in terms of a contemplative life which had turned its back upon life's ordinary duties in order to gain time for uninterrupted prayer, but in terms of familiar human virtues like honesty, truth-telling, generosity, and unselfishness. It has had its failures and compromises no doubt, some of them glaring. But its ideal has remained unchanged. Catholics would have the church produce saints. Protestantism would have all Christians holy.

Protestants, to be sure, recognize that there are tasks which call for special heroism and callings which require special discipline, and in movements like the foreign missionary enterprise and organizations like the Student Volunteer movement it provides the opportunity for those who wish to go the second mile. But even while doing this it insists that these devoted spirits are only doing what all of us are called to do and ought each of us in his own place to be doing. In Protestantism there is no place for the double standard.

<sup>6</sup> On the relation of aristocracy to democracy cf. the author's *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy* (New York, 1923).



### 3. THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN PROTESTANT PIETY

The characteristics of Protestant piety thus briefly described appear most clearly when we consider the Protestant attitude toward the church. The Protestant, I repeat, is a churchman, and for him as for the Catholic the church has an indispensable part to play in the revelation of God to man; but that part is a different one and his attitude is correspondingly different. To the Protestant the church is not primarily an institution, but a company of people. It is composed of those who, having received the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as that revelation is presented and preserved in the Bible, have responded to that revelation in penitence and faith and, gratefully accepting the forgiveness therein freely offered, have consecrated themselves wholeheartedly to God's service.

Protestants differ in the extent to which they carry their emphasis upon the spirituality of the church. Some carry it so far as to regard all forms of institutional Christianity with suspicion. Others (and these the majority) believe that the organized church holds a real though subordinate place in the purpose of God.

Most emphatic in their affirmation of the spirituality of the Church have been the Friends. Standing at the extreme left wing of Protestantism they have carried their protest against institutional religion

to the farthest point. While the more conservative Protestant bodies have retained both sacraments and ministry, regarding them as divine ordinances with a rightful place in the life of the church, the Friends have rejected both. This they have done not because they attach no value to ministry or sacrament, but because they believe that the place given to them in the historic churches, Catholic and Protestant alike, has been too restricted. To the Friends every Christian is called to be Christ's minister and every act done in his name is sacramental. For God who is ever present in his world is speaking to all men by his Holy Spirit, and to him who will stop and listen he is ever ready to give his inner light.

Nor is it only in their view of the importance of institutional Christianity that Protestants differ from Catholics. They differ also in their view of its function. To the Catholic the church is an institution given to man by God to do for him what he cannot do for himself. To the Protestant the church is an instrument offered him by God in order to help him to do more effectively what through God's grace he has been commanded and empowered to do. It is the society of those who have been called by God to serve their fellowmen.

This conception of the church as a society for practical service is more in evidence in some parts of the Protestant world than in others. It is more congenial to the Calvinist than to the Lutheran, to the American than to the European. It has its dangers, as we have seen. It tends to make of the church a

practical convenience, if not a social club. But it witnesses to an essential truth to which Catholicism has not always been sufficiently alive, that the life to which God calls us is one in which piety expresses itself in the service of one's fellows and that the test of the church's success is the extent to which it helps men to render this service effectively.

What I have thus tried to give is the conception of the church as it is derived from a study of the consensus of the most important Protestant creeds as that consensus has been interpreted by their practice. The church as the creeds define it is a body which owes its institution to an original divine revelation which centres in Jesus Christ, which acknowledges a divine standard once for all given, namely, Holy Scripture, and which believes that Scripture fulfils its divinely appointed function only when it is interpreted to the believer by God himself and, accepted in faith, works out its appropriate transformation of life. The authority which the Protestant recognizes, as his official creeds define it, is that of God himself speaking in history through Jesus Christ, in literature through the Bible, in society through the church, in a man's own soul through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Only when the witness of all these agree can the Protestant say with confidence: This is God's word to me.

We see how poles apart this view is from the view of Protestantism represented by the definition quoted at the beginning of the last chapter, the definition which makes the ultimate authority for the individ-

ual the self of the moment. Protestantism, I repeat, like Catholicism, is a churchly religion and stands or falls with the validity of a divine revelation once for all given, even if progressively received.

This view of Protestantism, derived from a study of its official creeds, is confirmed by an observation of its practice. In its history as well as in its ideal, Protestantism has been a churchly religion. It has developed its understanding of God's revelation through a continuing tradition and from time to time has recorded the understanding reached in creeds and confessions of faith.<sup>7</sup> But unlike their Catholic fellow-Christians, Protestants have never given these creeds the quality of finality. Always they have claimed the right, for the individual believer as well as for the church at large, to return to the fountainhead of revelation in the Bible and to report the new insight won in the language of the new day.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. IN WHAT SENSE A PROTESTANT IS AN INDIVIDUALIST

We are ready now to return to the question on which we touched at the outset without attempting

<sup>7</sup> For a convenient account of the more important of these creeds consult Schaff, Philip, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. III. Cf. also Walker, Williston, *Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York, 1893) and McGlothlin, W. J., *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia, 1911).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. XXV, Secs. IV and V: "This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error."

an answer, why so many people identify Protestantism with individualism. It is for lack of observing certain elementary distinctions which need only to be stated to be recognized.

In the sense that his conviction of the truth of divine revelation, however that revelation may be conceived in detail, rests in the last analysis upon his inward conviction of that truth the Protestant is an individualist. But he is so in no other sense and for no other reason than that in which the Catholic also is an individualist. What differentiates man from the beast is just this, that he is a creature capable of conviction, and conviction differs from all other forms of consciousness in that it owes its final and compelling force to a sense of inward reasonableness that carries with it its own evidence. As human beings, Catholics share with Protestants this God-given faculty and rejoice in it. They differ not in its possession, but in the use which they make of it and in the limits which they assign to it.

Catholics and Protestants agree that it is a chief function of reason (taking reason in its most comprehensive sense for the sum of all those capacities and activities by which man acquires knowledge) to guide man to the acceptance of the proper authority. No Catholic is satisfied that one should join the church on external compulsion. In his case, as in that of the Protestant, inward assent is the goal. So long as conscience interposes its veto, it is man's duty to obey, however misguided may be its voice. This is common Catholic and Protestant doctrine. They differ as to

what conscience says and as to the kind of church to which it points. The church to which the Catholic is led by his conscience is one whose authority, once accepted, releases the believer from the necessity for some decisions for which the Protestant still feels responsible.

This does not mean that the Catholic, even after he has accepted the church's authority, is dispensed from the necessity of exercising his individual judgment. On the contrary, there remains a wide field for the exercise of that judgment; how wide, our study has already shown. Here it is sufficient to say that when the teaching of the church is accepted, it remains to be interpreted; and when the commands of the church have been received, they remain to be applied. Thus when full account has been taken of all the help supplied, there remains a wide field for the exercise of the individual judgment.

The decisive difference begins when we approach a certain kind of question with which the decisions of the church confront us. In the measure that the Catholic is faced by decisions of his church which have taken the form of law, the conception of churchly authority to which his conscience has brought him requires him to accept them without question as expressing God's will for him. To question them would be to violate the fundamental principle which makes him a Catholic. Were he to do so he would have no alternative but to break with the church.

The Protestant does not recognize this necessity. Highly as he values the decisions of the church as

embodied in its creeds and its practice, he does not regard any part of that tradition as so definitive that, if conscience requires, it may not be questioned by one who desires to retain his standing in the church. That right must indeed be exercised with great caution. To break with the tradition of the church involves a risk which no conscientious man will lightly run. Nevertheless it is a risk which must sometimes be taken, and in taking it the Protestant is conscious of acting as a good churchman.

This was the spirit in which the Reformers approached their task of criticism. The impulse which led Luther to criticize the church had, as he believed, come to him from the church. Only as a last resort and with heavy heart did he accept the necessity of a break.

This is the spirit of the true Protestant in every generation. Highly as he values his individual judgment, it is for the church's sake that he exercises it. It was not a Catholic, but that stout old Puritan, Timothy Dwight, to whom we owe the hymn:

"I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The Church our dear Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood."

It cannot be denied that there are many Protestants in our day who have lost this vivid church-consciousness. There are Protestants, so-called, who are individualists, pure and simple; and their presence in many of our Protestant churches explains, though it

does not justify, the Catholic misinterpretation of Protestantism. But the existence of this individualistic strand in the church life of our time, far from being a reason for abandoning the Protestant ideal in order to take refuge in Catholicism, is the strongest reason for reaffirming that ideal in its purity. For a time Catholicism may furnish a welcome refuge to troubled souls in an age which, unless all signs fail, is losing its faith in democratic institutions. But the price which it demands is too high to be willingly paid by those who have been brought up in an atmosphere of freedom. Before the surrender is made therefore, it is well to explore the possibilities which Protestantism may still have to offer to those who are in search of a social authority which requires no sacrifice of individual freedom.

## 5. WHAT THE WORLD OWES TO THE PROTESTANT SPIRIT

In a famous essay,<sup>9</sup> the historian, James Anthony Froude, reminded an age that had grown impatient with the rigid theology of Calvinism of some of the contributions which Calvinism had made to the spread of liberty, both civil and religious. It is one of the paradoxes of history that this grim creed, with its predestinarian doctrine, should have inspired revolutionaries and nerved the arms of fighters. But Calvinism is not the only example of a creed that has shown that determinism in theory is consistent with extraor-

<sup>9</sup> "Calvinism" in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (New York, 1893).



dinary activity in practice. Communism too has a deterministic philosophy, but it is turning the world upside down. There is nothing that can strengthen the arm to fight or the will to endure like the conviction that the everlasting God (or if one be a materialist, its secular substitute in the nature of things) is on one's side. This conviction Calvinists possess, and in every generation it has made them fighters and reformers.

Wherever we look in the history of Protestantism we find this fighting spirit at work. It set Calvin to reforming the government of Geneva. It made the Huguenots protestants against the abuses of their time in church and in state. It armed the Covenanters against the Stuarts and made Cromwell's Ironsides invincible in battle. It sent the Pilgrims across the sea in their search for a new world in which to worship God according to their conscience. It was the inspiration of Washington in his eight weary years of fighting, and of Lincoln in his equally momentous ordeal. It found expression in the Gettysburg Address and in the Second Inaugural. It sent John Wesley on his mission to the coal miners of England, and fired the little group who gathered by the haystack at Williams College with their vision of a world won for Christ. It started William Booth on his mission to the outcasts of London and gave Walter Rauschenbusch his social gospel. Whether it be outwardly, in the search for new places to penetrate, or inwardly, in the quest of new insights to achieve, it has been the religion of adventurers and explorers.

It has been always spurring men to new action. Nowhere has it suffered men to be content.

Especially great is the debt which the Catholic Church owes to the Protestant spirit. Where Protestantism has been strong, Catholicism has been pure. What the pre-Reformation Councils had not been able to achieve, the Council of Trent carried through. After Trent we see a reformed Catholicism, self-conscious, active, fired with the missionary spirit. The answer to Luther was the Society of Jesus; the answer to Calvin was St. Theresa, and St. John of the Cross.

It has been so ever since. To see Catholicism at its best you must not go to Mexico or to South America or to the Philippines, where until recently it has been unopposed. You must not go to Spain, where Protestantism has been all but unknown. Even Rome will not show you Catholicism at its best. For this you must go to Germany, to England, or to the United States, where it faces an aggressive Protestantism and must be constantly on the alert in order to hold its own.

Not only as a critic has Protestantism served Catholicism, but as an example. Much that is most characteristic of contemporary Catholicism it owes directly to Protestant example. The societies and clubs through which Catholics provide healthy recreation for their young people are a Catholic imitation of the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. The renewed interest in Biblical studies, the growing attempt to interest laymen in the study of the New Testament

is again a Catholic adaptation of Protestant methods. If today there is one welfare council through which all American Catholicism functions in social matters, it is because ten years before the American Protestants founded the Federal Council of Churches.

These are after all less important matters. The real service which Protestantism has rendered and the final justification of its right to be is the men and women whom it has inspired. Through Protestantism the experience of living religion has been made possible for many whom the Catholic Church was not reaching and piety has been shown to be consistent with life in the world.

Robert Burns was no lover of the church, either Protestant or Catholic; but when he met genuine piety he bowed his head. In many a simple Scottish home he discovered a spirit which commanded his reverence, and in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* has left us an unforgettable picture of what the universal priesthood of believers may mean:

"The priest-like father reads the sacred page,  
 How Abram was the friend of God on high;  
 Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage  
 On Amalek's ungracious progeny;  
 . . . . .  
 Then kneeling down, to heaven's Eternal King,  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays:  
 Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days:"

To understand the genius of Protestant piety one must enter such a home as that of Jonathan Edwards and learn to know that rare spirit of which he has

painted us a picture in words which could be written only by one who was himself a poet and a saint:

"They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested Himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."<sup>10</sup>

Such a picture may be paralleled in the life story of many a Catholic saint; but the significant thing is that this is the portrait of one who, as wife, was destined to become the mother of eleven children and who, if one is to judge from the records which have come down to us, carried into all the interests of the home the simple faith that had marked her life as a girl.

<sup>10</sup> Allen, Alexander V. G., *Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1889), pp. 45-46.

"Lovely to look at," writes her latest biographer, "she was even lovelier to live with. . . . Proud of her husband—sinfully so, she felt at times—she devoted herself to him. Without her constant care and fending it would have been impossible for him to . . . accomplish as much as he did. In the bringing up of her children she showed herself extremely skillful. Visitors at the Edwardses' home, noting the number of children . . . marvelled at her poise and soft-speaking. . . . From the beginning she tried to train them in ways of independent judgment and reasonableness, always explaining to them why she asked them to do thus and so. She taught them to pray. When she met with any special difficulty in this matter . . . she was wont to apply to Mr. Edwards for advice and assistance. Fortunately they saw eye to eye in these matters. They did not, as Edwards put it, weaken one another's hands in this work, one parent disapproving what the other doth; one smiling upon a child while the other frowns; one protecting, while the other corrects. When things in a family are thus, children are likely to be undone."<sup>11</sup>

Through such a life Mrs. Edwards showed that it is possible to carry into the humdrum duties of a New England minister's wife the spirit of which saints are made, and in this she is typical of many another gracious soul whose constant piety has been the inspiration of husband and children.

But it is not only in quiet homes that the saints

<sup>11</sup> McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, Jr., *Jonathan Edwards* (Harpers, New York, 1932), pp. 91-93.

of Protestantism are to be found.<sup>12</sup> Forty odd years ago a young English physician faced the question of his life's future. He had completed his professional studies with distinction, and was looking about for a practice, when a friend happened to call his attention to the condition of the deep-sea fishermen in the North Sea. It seems that some good people, moved by the loneliness and exposure of these fishers' lives, and, above all, by their almost complete deprivation of the conventional forms of religion, had conceived the plan of fitting out a little steamer to accompany them on their fishing trips as a floating chapel and house of friendship. The boat was secured, equipped and manned, with a single exception. A surgeon was needed who would be willing to make the steamer his headquarters and practise his profession among the fishermen, while at sea.

The idea appealed to the young doctor's spirit of adventure. He abandoned the thought of a conventional practice, applied for the post, and became the physician of the Royal National Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen.

Some years later a second call came to him, which carried him to a new continent. Hard as is the lot of the North Sea fishermen of England, their time at sea comes to an end at last, and when they turn their faces homeward, they reach a country where there are churches and schools, hospitals and libraries, and all the other accompaniments of a Christian civiliza-

<sup>12</sup> The paragraphs that follow have been taken, with the permission of the publishers, from my book, *Imperialistic Religion and the Religion of Democracy*, pp. 139-141.

tion. But there were other fisher-folk of the same stock who are not so fortunate. Along the northeast shore of British America there stretches the lonely coast known as the Labrador. Here live the Canadian and Newfoundland fishermen, who ply their trade in the North Atlantic. These had no schools, no hospitals, few churches—only the saloon and the trader's store. Men died for want of a doctor. Minds starved for lack of a teacher. Souls with deep religious longings were left unshepherded, because their fellow-Christians had forgotten them.

The thought of these lonely people would not let the young doctor alone. If no one else was available he determined to go to them. So he bade goodbye to his friends in the North Sea, and started on this new adventure.

What Wilfred Grenfell has done in forty years in the Labrador is too well known to need retelling. Hospitals have been established, staffed and sustained. Industries have been started, schools provided, churches enlarged and strengthened. The conscience of two continents has been aroused, and friends raised up by the thousands who have made these lonely lives their concern. But what interests us here is what has been going on in Grenfell himself. If you asked him what first took him to the Labrador he would tell you, "Religion." If you asked him what the Labrador had given him in return, he would still answer, "Religion."

In his journey from one hospital to another along the coast, it was often necessary for Doctor Grenfell,

when navigation was no longer possible, to traverse some inlet of the sea on the ice. On one of these journeys a sudden change of the weather cut him off from the mainland and set him adrift on an ice-pan which was carrying him out to the open sea. Then he realized that so far as human foresight could anticipate the end of his life had come. He has shared with us his thoughts during those hours of loneliness when he stood face to face with his God. "Except for my friends," he writes, "I had nothing I could think of to regret whatever."<sup>13</sup> When, after hours of exposure, deliverance came at last, he was glad to be back once more with a new lease of life before him. "I had learned on the pan many things, but chiefly that the one cause for regret, when we look back on a life which we think is closed forever, will be the fact that we have wasted its opportunities."

I have told the story of Grenfell's experience at some length because it is typical of a form of piety which is much in evidence in recent Protestant history. It is the kind of piety illustrated by such men as Henry Drummond in Scotland<sup>14</sup> and among Americans by Walter Rauschenbusch.<sup>15</sup> It is a piety which, having accepted God's forgiveness in simple faith, turns its back once for all upon self, and in the effort to interpret God's love to others in practical

<sup>13</sup> Grenfell, Wilfred, *Adrift on an Ice-pan* (Boston, 1908), p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, George Adam, *The Life of Henry Drummond* (New York, 1898).

<sup>15</sup> Nixon, Justin Wroe, *The Moral Crisis in Christianity* (New York, 1931), esp. Chap. I.



service finds the surest way to realize the presence of God. It is the piety which Walter Rauschenbusch has voiced in his *Prayers of the Social Awakening*—prayers which perhaps more perfectly than any other contemporary document interpret the spirit of the modern Protestant.

“O Thou great Father of the weak, lay thy hand tenderly on all the little children on earth and bless them. Bless our own children, who are life of our life, and who have become the heart of our heart. Bless every little child-friend that has leaned against our knee and refreshed our soul by its smiling trustfulness. Be good to all children who long in vain for human love, or for flowers and water, and the sweet breast of Nature. But bless with a sevenfold blessing the young lives whose slender shoulders are already bowed beneath the yoke of toil, and whose glad growth is being stunted forever. Suffer not their little bodies to be utterly sapped, and their minds to be given over to stupidity and the vices of an empty soul. We have all jointly deserved the millstone of thy wrath for making these little ones to stumble and fall. Grant all employers of labor stout hearts to refuse enrichment at such a price. Grant to all the citizens and officers of states which now permit this wrong the grace of holy anger. Help us to realize that every child of our nation is in very truth our child, a member of our great family. By the Holy Child that nestled in Mary’s bosom; by the memories of our own childhood joys and sorrows; by the sacred possibilities that slumber in every child, we beseech thee to save us from killing the sweetness of young life by the greed of gain.”<sup>16</sup>

By examples such as these we may see what Protestant piety offers to those who are willing to take its demands seriously—the opportunity to practise

<sup>16</sup> From *Prayers of the Social Awakening* (Boston, 1910), by Walter Rauschenbusch. Copyright The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

religion in a region to which its claims have not yet penetrated and to consecrate to its service talents which the church has hitherto been content to relegate to a subordinate place as secular. Protestant piety is piety which accepts literally the word of the angel to Peter: "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Acts 11:9.



*PART III (CONTINUED)*  
*CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM*

CHAPTER XI

THE STRENGTH AND THE WEAKNESS OF  
CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANTISM

1. Is Modern Protestantism Still Protestant?
2. Has Protestantism Had Its Day?
3. What Protestantism Holds in Trust for the Future.
4. Signs of Promise.

*The contrast between modern Protestantism and the Protestantism of the Reformation raises two questions of far-reaching importance. One is the question whether the change which separates modern Protestantism from its predecessors is so great that they can no longer be regarded as belonging to the same type; the other the question whether, even granting that this continuity can be maintained, Protestantism in the sense in which we know it today has had its day and must give place to some other as yet undetermined form of religion.*

*As to the first, the position is taken that great as have been the changes that separate modern Protestantism from that of the Reformation, the bond which unites them in faith, in moral ideal, in personal religious experience, is greater still. We may be modern Protestants, but we are still Protestants.*

*As to the second, the position is taken that many and great as are the weaknesses of contemporary Protestantism, both in its organization and in the quality of its religious life, its essential spirit is not only still alive, but is still needed. Protestantism in its ideal stands for the democratic spirit in religion. It is born of the conviction that God as Person deals with men as persons, and that no substitute for the individual's appropriation of God's revelation through personal faith can ever be found.*

## 1. IS MODERN PROTESTANTISM STILL PROTESTANT?

Our study of Protestant piety has brought us in sight of a question with which we must come to terms before we can make further progress. We have included among our illustrations of Protestant piety some contemporary examples. But is contemporary Protestantism still Protestant? Has it not departed so far from the standards of the original Protestantism that it no longer deserves the name?

Some say that our contemporary Protestantism is no longer Protestant because we no longer hold the old creeds in the sense in which they were held by Luther or Calvin or organize our churches as they were organized by Knox or the fathers of Westminster; and the conclusion they draw is that we ought to return to the old ways of thought and life and have no fellowship with those who will not join us in the return.

Others agree that the break is irreparable and that between the Protestantism of the Reformers and that of the modernists there is no common ground. But they find in this fact a cause for congratulation rather than for regret. Their faces are turned forward rather than back; and if the outline of the future to which they are moving is still dim, so much the better. That makes life all the more interesting. Man has found his way before and he will find it again. But it is man they tell us who must find it. The old days of reliance upon a supernatural God

are gone forever. The religion of the future must be a religion by and for man. If Christianity is to survive at all, it must be merged in a larger humanism.

There are many who are not ready so easily to surrender their continuity with the past. To them the changes which have taken place in Protestantism are such only as are implicit in its nature. Protestantism as they understand it began as the religion of men who believed that it was possible to achieve a true church without the sacrifice of freedom and it is still such a religion today. Widely as they differ from their predecessors in their thinking and in their ways of doing things, the things they have in common with them are more important still: faith in God, loyalty to Christ, experience of his salvation, acceptance of his Bible, fellowship in his Church. What if they do understand these things in different ways and accept them for different reasons, the important thing is that they accept them and, accepting them, feel themselves true disciples of Luther and of Calvin. "Since the Reformation," maintains Harnack, one of the most eloquent and able defenders of this point of view, "no new phase in the history of the Christian religion has occurred."<sup>1</sup>

Whether we adopt one of these views or the other will depend in large part upon the standard we bring with us to our judgment, and in particular, upon the extent to which change in the life of an individual or of a social group seems normal to us. We

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, Adolf von, *What Is Christianity?* (New York, 1901, Second Edition, Revised), pp. 320-321.

know from our own experience that very great changes may take place in an individual life without thereby destroying the continuity of personality. Why should we expect it to be otherwise in the life of a society?

In each of the three realms by which we may measure religious change we find that the things which the modern Protestant has in common with his predecessors are more important than the things in which he differs from them. It is so in the realm of faith. Great as are the changes which have taken place in the view of the universe from the view of the world that was held by Calvin or the fathers of Westminster, in the one great essential the modern Protestant feels himself at one with them. To him as to them God is a self-revealing God. To him as to them he has made his will known in nature, in history, and most clearly of all in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. To him as to them he speaks to men directly by his Holy Spirit, calling them out of their sin and ignorance into the new life of the kingdom of God.

This faith in God's power to speak directly to men today explains the central place which is still given to the Bible by Protestants. For in the Bible they feel their most direct point of contact with the Christ whom all Christians recognize as Lord. And this not as a historic figure simply, one who lived and died and has now ascended to some distant heaven from which some day he will return, but as the living Spirit present in the world today to bless, to trans-



form, and to renew. To the modern Protestant, as to his predecessor, the Bible is both witness and inspiration, witness to the great things Christ has done in the past, invitation to share the greater experience he will make possible in the future—a redemption that shall not only include all men, but all parts of the life of man.

In his conception of his duty, too, the modern Protestant feels himself at one with his Protestant forefathers in the things that are most essential. He recognizes, as they did, that we must be judged by a higher than human standard. He is conscious of living his life in the sight of God, who asks of each man that he be perfect, as he himself is perfect. And when he asks where we weak and finite mortals can look for a measure by which to test our human achievement, he finds his eyes turning, as theirs turned, to the man Christ Jesus, in whom God has shown us in human form what he would have us be.

The modern Protestant does not believe that we should try to reproduce the conditions which obtained during Jesus' earthly life, or overlook the lessons which God has been teaching us through all the succeeding centuries; rather that we should bring to the problems of our own day the faith and love which characterized all that Jesus did, confident that the same divine Spirit which furnished him for his unique task is still available for us, and that by this Spirit it should be possible for his church to achieve in our day the "greater works" to which he bade us look forward.

Above all the modern Protestant is Protestant in the type of his religious experience. For he is living in a world in which the personal God is even now at work revealing his will to those who have ears to hear and pointing the way to those who have eyes to see. He knows more than his fathers did of the way that message comes; he understands, as they did not, how many intricate factors God uses in the process of mediation by which his will is made known. Yet to him, as to them, the message, when it comes, is wonderful, and he realizes that the place on which he is standing is holy ground.

This is what he means, when, with the Protestants of every age, he reaffirms the sanctity of the secular life. It is his way of saying that God is everywhere at work; that whatever spot one approaches with Christ at one's side is holy ground, and whatever task one undertakes at Christ's behest is religious work. All that this means we have scarcely begun to appreciate, for it is only recently that we have begun to learn in how many and in what intricate ways our lives are interrelated, and what radical changes must take place in the warp and woof of our social life before it can be made conformable to the ideal of Christ. What these changes are and how they may take place, the experience of the future alone cannot tell us. To discover them will require the united effort of Christians in all walks of life who bring their specialized knowledge to the service of the church and their technical skill to its ministry.

We may agree with Harnack, then, that our mod-

ern Protestantism is still Protestant, and yet question whether his statement is justified that since the Reformation there has been no new stage in the history of the Christian religion. It is always easy to overestimate the extent of the change which has taken place in one's own generation. But the more one lives oneself into the life of the men who gave Protestantism its classic form, the more one feels that something has entered into the life of our time to which they were strangers. That new factor is the conception of development. The acceptance of this conception—let me say rather, the experience of this fact—measures the difference between the old and the new. So far as we accept it, our religious life acquires a distinctive character. We may be Protestants, but we are modern Protestants, and this sets us a task which is different in important respects from that which Luther and Calvin faced. That task is to achieve a church that shall make place in its theory as well as in its practice for difference.

I say a church that shall make room for difference. And this not only in its practice but in its theory. In fact, as we have seen, there have always been differences within the church, some of them important and far-reaching differences, but they have been there, not because of our theory, but in spite of it. The time has come for the church to regularize its practice; to show why in a living church there must be difference and of what kind.

Nothing is more surprising to the student of Protestant theology than the subordinate place given to

the doctrine of the church in the theology of the past generation. To the Catholic, as we have seen, the church is the central Christian doctrine. It meets us at the very outset and it dominates the treatment from the start. In early Protestant theology too the church was given a place of commanding importance. In many recent Protestant textbooks however it is postponed until the closing chapters. The reason is not that the church holds an unimportant place in Protestant piety, but that, in their reaction against the abuses of institutional Christianity Protestant theologians have tended to concentrate their attention upon the more personal aspects of religion. The institution, they have felt, was secondary, not primary. If the heart was right, the rest of the body could be left to take care of itself.

We are finding out that this is not true. As the spirit cannot function without the body, so the Christian society requires the church; and that church, which the Apostle calls "the body of Christ," needs constant care if it is to maintain its life and to serve its purpose.

We find in the most widely different circles a renewed interest in the doctrine of the church. It meets us in the Church of England, in the Anglo-Catholic re-emphasis of the importance of the church as an institution. It meets us in Germany, in the Barthian protest against a theology that has obscured the line between the church and the world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Barthian theology is, and is designed to be, churchly theology—the recovery over against orthodoxy and liberalism alike of the true Protestant doctrine of the church.

Even in America, where individualism has won its greatest triumphs and institutional religion is most at a discount, we find a growing recognition among Protestants of the significance of the church as an institution and of the need of rethinking from the foundation its place and significance in modern life.<sup>3</sup> What we need—we see more clearly every day—is a revival of the church consciousness in Protestantism. Only it must be a revival which is consistent with the Protestant spirit and which conserves the truth for which historic Protestantism is witness.

## 2. HAS PROTESTANTISM HAD ITS DAY?

But is this possible? Can Protestantism, with its wide differences in thought and in practice achieve the unity which is necessary for the church of today?

In 1908 the Reverend Newman Smyth, a respected Congregational minister of New Haven, long an active worker in the cause of church unity, summed up the conclusions to which his many years' experience had led him in a pamphlet entitled *Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism*.<sup>4</sup> In this he maintained the thesis that Protestantism in its historic form had had its day. Indispensable, even glorious,

<sup>3</sup> An indication of this new interest is the co-operative study of the relation of church and state which has recently been undertaken by a committee of theologians and laymen appointed by the Federal Council. Recent events in Germany have given this subject increased importance and have made especially appropriate the topic chosen by the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work for its next international study conference: "The Christian View of the Nation."

<sup>4</sup> (New York, 1908.)

as had been its service in the past, the time had come when it must give place to a more comprehensive form of religion, one that would be in fact and not merely in name Catholic.

During the quarter century that has intervened since this book was written, Doctor Smyth has found many to agree with him. The belief has been gaining ground in many different quarters that all is not well with contemporary Protestantism. Even those who do not accept Doctor Newman Smyth's conclusion that Protestantism as a distinctive form of the Christian religion has had its day are ready to admit that in its present form it suffers from serious defects which, unless speedily corrected, are likely to have disastrous consequences.

These critics are found both within and without the church. They call attention to the lack of a central authority in Protestantism, to its needless multiplication of churches and of ministers, to its indefinite and often contradictory teaching, to its lack of effective discipline. By contrast Catholicism is held up for admiration as a type of religion that is at least sure of itself and can be counted upon to do and to teach today what it did and taught yesterday.

In particular, these critics reproach contemporary Protestantism for its lack of a responsible central authority. In place of definite doctrines accepted by all, we find individual theologians and schools advocating beliefs which are often inconsistent with one another. The relativity which is so conspicuous a feature of the intellectual life of our time has in-

vaded the world of religion and nowhere has it found greater hospitality than in Protestantism. It is not only that the different denominations differ in their teaching, but the different schools and parties within each.

It results that the individual who wishes guidance for his personal problems finds little to help him in contemporary Protestantism. The Catholic Church has its authoritative teaching on matters of conduct as well as of belief, and the perplexed spirit that wishes counsel finds its need met in the confessional. But the Protestant pastor has no such authoritative guidance to give. Among all the needs revealed by a recent study of Protestant ministerial education, that of help in dealing with questions of conscience recurred most frequently.<sup>5</sup>

Thus both as teacher and as pastor the Protestant minister is expected to assume too heavy a responsibility. Effective though he may be in meeting particular needs and in dealing with people who are of similar temperament, his church provides him with no adequate machinery for coping with the infinitely complicated relationships of modern life. When the minister happens to be a strong man, adequately trained and fertile in resources, there is no limit to the good he can do and is doing. But most ministers, like most of the rest of us, are ordinary people and they need to be helped if they are to do their best work. This help the Protestant Church of today is not furnishing its ministry in adequate degree.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, W. Adams, *The Education of American Ministers* (New York, 1934), Vol. I, p. 202.

Those who criticize contemporary Protestantism as inefficient and outworn have no lack of material out of which to build their case. But before we attempt to answer them in detail it is necessary for us to do justice to the deeper causes which give their criticism its driving power. This criticism, while directed ostensibly at the functioning of the Protestant Church as an institution, is in reality a challenge of the practicability of Protestantism as a way of life. It is the reflection in the field of religion of a growing distrust of freedom both as an instrument of government and as a philosophy of life.

Look where we will, whether to Rome, where only recently Mussolini has been summoning the people from all parts of Italy to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the Fascist Revolution; or to Moscow, where the spirit of Lenin is marshalling the youth of Russia for the battle of the proletariat against the capitalists; or, most recently and most dramatically, to Germany, where Hitler finds the most wholehearted and enthusiastic supporters of his doctrine of the all-embracing authoritarian state among the young; everywhere you will find a revival of external authority. Even in America, the land of Jefferson and of Lincoln, you will find men and women who say that the gift of freedom to differ is too dangerous to be entrusted to modern men.

The critics of democracy are not content to be critics merely. They have their own substitutes to propose. We see springing up in the most varied quarters a new loyalty, a loyalty which in some of its



contemporary manifestations has assumed the character of a rival religion—the religion of the sovereign state. Sometimes, as in Russia under the Soviets, it claims universal supremacy and offers itself as a gospel of salvation for all mankind. Sometimes, as in Fascist Italy and in Nazi Germany, it is content to limit its claim to unquestioned sovereignty to the national boundary. But wherever it is found and whatever the limits of its claim, it is alike in this, that it denies the competency of the individual to determine his social duty for himself. In the democratic effort to arrive at unity through discussion it sees a futile waste of energy. For the individual, as for society, it recognizes only one way to a rich and happy life, and that is the way of complete submission to the leader in whose person for the moment the authority of the state is embodied, whether that leader be named Stalin or Mussolini or Hitler.

In such an age it is only natural that the Protestant type of religion should be at a discount. For Protestantism is the expression of the democratic spirit in religion. Democracy is born of man's faith that freedom and authority are not incompatible, that man serves his fellows best when he is truest to the voice within, and that only through such common loyalty to truth is any really stable fellowship possible.

We must not be surprised therefore to find that for the moment the star of Catholicism seems to be in the ascendant and that when from the Vatican the voice of the successor of Peter is heard calling back

his errant children to the bosom of mother church, there are many who heed the call. If we are wise, we shall keep open minds to discover what weaknesses in our contemporary Protestantism these conversions reveal. But we shall not make the mistake of concluding that, because the present functioning of our Protestant institutions is defective, the Protestant spirit has had its day, any more than we shall conclude that because for the moment the star of democracy is in eclipse there will be no new rebirth of freedom. As long as man is man we may be sure that as the state will need the democrat, so the church will need the Protestant. It is for us as Protestants by conviction to learn what Catholics can teach us of the springs from which Catholicism draws its own power that as free spirits and heirs of all the good things in the universe of God we may appropriate them for our enjoyment and enrichment.

### 3. WHAT PROTESTANTISM HOLDS IN TRUST FOR THE FUTURE

It is not then by abandoning its own principles in order to set up some external authority that can compete with the Roman Church that Protestantism will make its best contribution to the church of the future; rather by rethinking those principles in the new context and applying them to the new conditions.

For indeed Protestantism is no passing phase of human experience—a school through which human-

ity must pass in order that, when its lessons have been learned, man may move on to something better. It expresses a faith which mankind can ill spare, the faith namely that the only unity which is permanently worth having is that which is won through freedom.

Protestants, as we have seen, value freedom of conscience. They value it so highly that for its sake they have been willing to face exile and the stake. But they value it, not for its own sake, but because it is a condition of something still more precious—the society which Christ came to establish, which has its roots in faith and its fruits in love. Protestantism is the counterpart in religion of that ideal of a society of nations, in which all alike—the least as the greatest—share on equal terms, since the bond which unites them is not force, but the respect which is due to man as man.

Many as are the points of similarity between the political ideal of democracy and the religious ideal of Protestantism, the points of difference are greater still. Democracy, as we know it in politics, is a form of humanism. It is born of faith in man as man, and has too often suffered shipwreck upon the hard rock of man's ignorance, cruelty, and selfishness. But the faith of Protestants is not based upon man. Their ground of hope is the character of God. It is because God is free Spirit—winning men to himself, not by the constraint of force, but by the appeal of the cross that Protestants dare to believe in the possibility of a church in which the bond of union

shall be fellowship in love rather than submission to law. It is because history shows that of all powers in the world love is the strongest—stronger than pain, stronger than death—that no temporary eclipse, no tragic retrogression can rob Protestants of their conviction that, in the end, God will have his way, and that the church, which is to be his witness to the world of incarnate love, will be a church of free men, bound to one another by a common faith, a common hope, and a common love.

If Protestants are thus to prove their right to a constituent place in the church of the future, they must apply their principles more consistently than they have done in the past. They must not deny to others the rights which they claim for themselves. They must recognize that, in God's great family there are many different kinds of children, and that in his education of the human race he employs more than one method. Authority has its place as well as freedom, and law as well as individual choice. The true Protestant will not expect all men's experience to be of the Protestant type. He will gladly recognize that the Catholic may be as conscientious as himself and that he may have much to learn from his experience. Freedom is the monopoly of no age and of no school. What matters is the goal to which it leads and the fruits in which it issues.

#### 4. SIGNS OF PROMISE

There is no point at which modern Protestantism differs more widely from the Protestantism of an

older generation than in the extent and the sincerity of its recognition that God uses many ways to draw men to himself. Our fathers were willing to have fellowship with all kinds of Christians, only not with Catholics. Catholics, they were convinced, were enemies to be distrusted, to be feared, and to be fought. Today we see that Catholics are fellow-Christians from whom indeed we may differ—with whom it may be we must contend—but whom we must respect, and from whom we may learn.

This willingness to learn from others—even from those from whom one differs as widely as Protestants from Catholics—is indeed one of the most encouraging features of contemporary Protestantism. Among recent writers on religion, I suppose that no English-speaking author has exercised a more widespread influence upon Protestant thinkers than the Roman Catholic Baron von Hügel. In his writings they have found a sympathetic understanding of what is true in Protestantism, which has made it easy for them to gain from him an insight into the true nature of Catholic piety.<sup>6</sup>

Nor is it only in individual understanding and sympathy that progress is to be registered. Much

<sup>6</sup> Few recent friendships have been more striking than that between Baron von Hügel and Professor Ernst Troeltsch. In their antecedents, training, and point of view, no two thinkers could have been more different. One a layman and amateur in theology, the other a professor trained in all the learning of the schools; one a Catholic by conviction, feeling himself at home in the Roman Church, the other a Protestant of the Protestants; one a specialist in social ethics, the other a master of mystical piety. Yet each understood and valued the other. Each was eager that the best the other had to give should be understood. No more effective exposi-

has been done to create the machinery through which the existing unity can find expression in action. We have noted the progress which has been made during the past two decades in creating organizations, local, national, and international, through which Protestants can function together. These organizations have not only made possible greater unity among Protestants. They have afforded a useful point of contact between Protestants and Catholics. In times of social crisis, as in the controversy over the twelve-hour day in the steel industry and the case of the Centralia riots, American Protestants have been able to co-operate with Catholics<sup>7</sup> in united witness and through their joint action in more than one American city the hours between twelve and three on Good Friday have been set free for Christian worship.<sup>8</sup>

tion of Troeltsch's thought is anywhere to be found than in von Hügel's essay "On the Specific Genius and Capacities of Christianity" which appears in Vol. I of his *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (New York, 1921), pp. 144-194; no more useful contribution to the church consciousness as distinct from that of the sect than Troeltsch has given in his *Social Teaching of the Christian Church* (New York, 1931).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *The Twelve Hour Day in the Steel Industry*. Research Bulletin No. 3, issued by The Department of Research and Education, Federal Council of Churches, 105 East 22d Street, New York City, June 6, 1923, p. 76. Statement issued by the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches, the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council, and the Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, regarding the report of the Iron and Steel Institute Committee on proposed total elimination of the twelve-hour day.

Of. also *The Centralia Case*. Issued jointly by The Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of Churches, The Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and The Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1930.

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Detroit, Brooklyn, Indianapolis, Chicago.

Specially significant are the closer relationships which have developed between Protestants and non-Roman Catholics in organizations like the Universal Christian Council and the World Conference on Faith and Order. Through such associations the way has been opened for united witness on a world scale and the unity which is implicit in Protestantism has been brought to clearer expression.

A striking illustration of the effects of this new ecumenical consciousness has been given in connection with the recent crisis in German Protestantism. Here the vitality of the Protestant type of Christianity has been given an impressive demonstration, a demonstration which has culminated in the formation of an independent synod, which claims to be the true church.

Nothing has been more impressive in connection with this whole movement than the conviction of the dissenting Protestants that in acting as they have done they were acting not as individuals but as churchmen, guarding a deposit of faith committed to them by the Apostles and witnesses of God's truth to generations still unborn.

Even more significant has been the response with which this action has been met by the other Protestant churches—the demonstration that has been given that in thus vindicating their right to worship God according to their conscience these courageous Protestants were acting, not as German Christians only, but as members of the church universal, to

which all their fellow-Protestants owed allegiance.<sup>9</sup>

This recognition has not been confined to Protestants. Roman Catholics too have recognized that in fighting the battle for freedom of conscience these Protestants were defending the Catholic cause as well as their own. Here, as so often in history, the experience of a common danger has formed a bond of union between those who had hitherto held aloof.

Thus at the very moment when democratic methods are being most rudely challenged and in the country which has carried the demand for uniformity farthest we have a fresh demonstration of the deathlessness of the Protestant spirit, its indispensable contribution to the church of the future.

<sup>9</sup> Leiper, Henry Smith, *The Church-State Struggle in Germany* (New York, 1934).





*PART IV*  
*THE CHURCH, CATHOLIC AND*  
*PROTESTANT*

CHAPTER XII

WHY THE WORLD NEEDS A UNITED CHURCH

1. The Place of the Church in Contemporary Society.
2. Different Theories of the Relation of Church and State.
3. What the World Has a Right to Expect of the Church.
4. The Tragedy of Our Divided Christianity.

*Not less important and perplexing than the problems which concern the relations of the different churches to one another is the problem of their relation to other human institutions, notably the nation and the state. From the point of view of the state, the church is a civil institution, one among many, and as such must conform to the laws of the state. From the point of view of the church, the state is a human institution, one among others, in which the church must live its life and which, therefore, must be judged according to Christian principles. From this dual relationship difficult problems arise which may lead, and often have led, to conflicts of authority.*

*The attitude of the state to the church has varied from one which asserts the supremacy of the state over the church in all matters except those which concern the personal religious life to one which accords large liberty to the church on all matters that do not threaten the security of the nation.*

*The attitude of the church to the state has varied from one in which the church claims either directly, as in a theocracy, or indirectly, through the action of its members, to set the standard for civic as well as for personal religious life, to one in which the church is content to be guaranteed by the state its right of witness in the field of personal religion. In the United States the attempt has been made through the separation of church and state to find a middle ground between the two extreme positions.*

*Whatever may be our solution of the theoretical questions at issue in this debate, there will be general agreement that it is the duty of the church to illustrate, through the quality of its own corporate life, the practicability of the principles which it inculcates. That it is not in fact doing this over wide areas of that life is a chief cause of its failure to exert a greater influence in civic affairs. At no point is this failure more apparent than in the fact that the church which preaches unity to others is itself divided.*

## 1. THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Thus far we have been considering the relation of the different branches of the church to one another. But the church is not the only social institution which has responsibility for man's welfare and order. And even if all the questions at issue between the churches could be satisfactorily adjusted, the question would still remain: What is the relation of the church to other social institutions—the family, the school, the industrial and economic order, above all the state. These questions, always important, often acute, have been brought again into the foreground by recent happenings both in this country and abroad.

For more than two years, as we have seen, the attention of the world has been concentrated upon Germany, which, as a result of the Nazi Revolution, has become the storm centre of European politics. And among the many points of interest—economic, financial, social, political—none has attracted more widespread attention than the struggle which has been carried on by one group of German Protestants to maintain the independence of the church against the attempt of another group to give it a political constitution which will make it in effect, if not in theory, a department of the state.

This struggle is all the more significant because in the past the relation of church and state in Germany

has been exceptionally close. From the first the state has recognized the importance of religion and provided for its support by taxation. The church on its part has recognized the sovereignty of the state in the economic and political sphere and has asked only the freedom to worship God according to its conscience. With such a background only a deep conviction could have produced the present crisis, the conviction that under the guise of ecclesiastical reform essential truth was being violated. When, following the precedent set by the state, a synod of the church passed a law denying any non-Aryan the right to serve as a minister and requiring of all ministers unqualified support of the decisions of the state, it seemed to many loyal Germans, both ministers and laymen, that the fundamental principles, not of Protestantism alone, but of Christianity had been violated, and they determined to resist at all costs.

It is not in Germany alone that the question of the right relation between church and state is a living issue. Nor is the form which the struggle has taken in that country the only form which it may assume. Four years ago the Supreme Court of the United States decided by a majority of five to four that Douglas Clyde Macintosh would not be granted the right of American citizenship in spite of the fact that he had been for fifteen years a resident of the country, that he was a distinguished teacher in one of its leading theological seminaries, and that he had served with honor as chaplain in the war. The ground

of the decision of the majority was Professor's Macintosh's refusal to promise in advance to support a war which his conscience disapproved. This decision has seemed to many loyal churchmen to limit the liberty guaranteed to church members by the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> Thus in America as well as in Germany we may have a case of conflicting sovereignties and a man may be forced to choose between loyalty to his country and loyalty to his church.<sup>2</sup>

To many Americans the Macintosh case came as a startling surprise. They had supposed that, whatever might be true of Europe, in this free country at least the relation of church and state had once for all been settled. The discovery that this was not the case, but that there are still important questions of principle which need to be determined has forced upon us the need of clear thinking upon the relation of church and state.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The Christian Century*, January 20, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> The Macintosh case is only one of many forms in which this issue may be raised. Scarcely a decade has passed since there was held at Dayton, in Tennessee, a trial in which a civil judge sustained the action of the educational authorities of the state in dismissing from his position as a teacher in the public school a man who, it was alleged, had contradicted the plain teaching of Scripture concerning God's creation of man by his acceptance of the theory of evolution. Here, unlike the case of Germany, where the effort is being made to make the church conform to the model of the state, it was the conservative party in the church that dictated to the civil authorities what should be taught in the schools. But in each case the underlying issue is the same. It is that of the relation of the church as an institution to other social institutions and, above all, to that all-embracing political institution which we call the state.

<sup>3</sup> It is encouraging to note that in many different quarters this subject is being discussed. We need only refer to the recent lectures of the Archbishop of York on "The Christian View of the State," to the International Study Conference on "The Christian View of the Nation" carried on by the Research Department of the

Indeed the problems raised by this relationship are both more numerous and more perplexing than appear at first sight. For they concern two independent institutions each sovereign in its own sphere whose jurisdiction at more than one point overlaps.<sup>4</sup>

From the point of view of the state the church is a civil institution, one among many. It is a self-governing corporation with its own rights and duties, its own laws and customs, its own officers and members. It possesses property, real and personal. Like other corporations, it is subject to the laws of the state and if it transgresses them may be called to account. Great as may be its dignity, impressive as may be its achievements, it is but one of many legally recognized bodies with which the state has to do. Like them, it is a civil institution and is to be judged by the laws which govern the relations of men to one another.

The position thus accorded to the church as a civil institution is confirmed by what scholars tell us of its history. The story of the church (as modern scientific historians rewrite it for us) is the story of earnest but imperfect men contending for power by the methods by which men win power in other fields. There is not one of all the weapons by which prestige is to be won but has been used by churchmen to advance the cause to which they are committed. There

Universal Christian Council for Life and Work in Geneva, and in this country to the study of "The Relation of Church and State" initiated by a representative committee appointed by the Federal Council of Churches.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, in the case of education, taxation, public morals, social justice, etc., not to speak of the basic issue of war and peace.

is not a failing to which mankind is liable but has been illustrated in the lives of those to whom the church has looked for leadership. "Wherever you meet the church," once said a great historian,<sup>5</sup> "there you will find a little bit of the world." The better one knows the church, the more intimately one enters into the motives of those who guide its affairs, the more convinced one will become of the truth of this saying.

Yet no churchman believes that this tells the whole story. True though it be so far as it goes, it leaves the most important matter out. This is the fact that the church, human though it be, is still a divine creation, charged by God with a message which mankind will neglect at its peril. This message it must deliver, cost what it may, however imperfect the human instruments through which it must be given.

The paradox which we have already noted when we contemplated the church from within reappears in accentuated form when we look at it from without. It is as present in a country like the United States, where from the point of view of the state the church is an association of individuals with no more privilege than any other voluntary association, as in a country like England where there is an establishment of religion. Look where you will—to Russia, where religion is officially outlawed, or to Italy, where by a concordat the state grants the church special privileges; to Germany, where for centuries the social responsibility of the church has been minimized,

<sup>5</sup> The late Professor Adolf Harnack, of Berlin.



or to Scotland, where it has seemed natural that the General Assembly should sit in judgment upon the acts of Parliament—or king—everywhere we find the paradox of an institution, manifestly human, regarding itself, and desiring to be regarded by others as in a unique sense a divine creation.

## 2. DIFFERENT THEORIES OF THE RELATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

There are different attitudes which one may take toward this paradox, and these attitudes will differ according to the underlying philosophy from which it is approached. Where that philosophy is a religious philosophy, as has on the whole been the case during the first seventeen centuries of our era, it will be one attitude; where, as at present, the point of view in many educational circles is frankly secular, it will be quite another. This contrast appears most clearly in connection with the different views taken of the relation of church and state.

Until comparatively recent times, the question as to the relation between church and state has focused at two points, first, whether the state as well as the church is a divine institution, and as such charged with authority in matters of morals and of religion; second, what exactly is the nature of that authority where it exists, and what is its relation to the authority which God has committed to the church.

In primitive Christianity, to be sure, these ques-

tions were not pressing; for no one then anticipated a long continuance of human history. Christians shared with many devout Israelites the belief in the impending end of the age. They looked for the speedy return of Christ in heavenly majesty to set up on earth the kingdom whose coming he had foretold. So far as the state was concerned it was an alien institution by which they were persecuted and oppressed. As for the church its main function was to keep alive the fires of faith and to prepare its members for the new world on the brink of which they were standing.

As the years passed, however, and the advent was delayed, the centre of interest insensibly shifted and the church assumed, if not a more important, at least a different function. It came to be thought of as the means through which the living Christ made his authority effective in the world. To Augustine, and in this he was typical of later thought in the West, the church is the institution through which Christ rules over men during their earthly life and by which he prepares them for that unending life which is to be theirs when life here shall have run its course.

While all Christians agreed in affirming Christ's presence in his church, they differed as to the extent and nature of the church's authority. In the Eastern church that authority was more narrowly conceived than in the West. It was the function of the church through its sacramental system to mediate the divine life made possible through the incarnation. To the state, on the other hand, God had committed responsibility for man's welfare in the sphere of economics

and politics. Both church and state were of divine institution, but each had its peculiar office and it was not for either to criticize the other in the performance of its divinely appointed function.<sup>6</sup>

We touch here a conception which has played a great rôle in Christian history and which accounts for some of the political contests which to the secular historian seem simply a struggle of rival factions for power. This is the conception of the state as the divinely appointed guardian of social order and the agent through which the church as a worshipping body is protected against hostile powers. This conception of the state as a divine institution dominates the thought of the Eastern church, and—subject to the modifications already described—accounts for its political organization.<sup>7</sup>

Very different has been the attitude of the Roman Church. Rome has never accepted the division of territory which has satisfied the Orthodox. It recognizes the state as of divine appointment to be sure, assigning to it in theory all questions of purely political nature while it reserves for itself questions of morals and of religion. But in practice it has proved that there are few political questions which have not

<sup>6</sup> In Eastern thought the division between church and state is not vertical, but horizontal. Both state and church are organs of divine authority, but the sphere of the church's operation is on a higher level than that of the state.

<sup>7</sup> We have spoken of the state as though it were a simple and unambiguous concept, but as a matter of fact it meets us in many different forms, now imperial, now national, now feudal. All the differences of theory which we have noted in our study of the church reappear in our study of the state. It too is many and one and the problem of the right relationship of the one to the many is a constantly recurring problem.

seemed to the church to have a moral aspect. When conflicts arise Rome claims the right to say where the line is to be drawn. The great Popes of the Middle Ages asserted, and often exercised, an authority truly imperial in character. In more recent days Popes like Leo XIII and Pius XI have traversed in their encyclicals the whole field of social and economic interest. They not only define the Christian view of the right social order, but they point out to each of the component elements its rightful place in the Christian scheme of things.<sup>8</sup>

Confronted by such a claim we find the state responding by a corresponding counter claim. In pre-Reformation times this found theoretical expression in the claim of the Hohenstauffen as successors of the Roman Emperors to supremacy over the Papacy in all matters political. With the rise of powerful national states it was reformulated as the doctrine of the divine right of kings. In practice it centred about the right of investiture (or, in other words, of the right of approval of any candidate nominated for the Episcopate).<sup>9</sup> This right was long successfully maintained by the Spanish throne for the church of Latin America<sup>10</sup> and by Henry VIII and his suc-

<sup>8</sup> In practice, to be sure, the Roman Curia, past master of diplomacy, is ready to compromise when no essential issue is concerned. It has learned to live with very different kinds of state and to function under widely different social systems, but as to its own right to speak in God's name on all major questions which concern man, it has never for an instant wavered.

<sup>9</sup> This way of stating the matter takes no account of a third factor to be considered, namely, the ecclesiastical authorities of the locality to whom technically the right of appointment belonged.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Mecham, J. Lloyd, *Church and State in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1934).

cessors for the Church of England. It had its chief apologist in Thomas Hobbes.<sup>11</sup> It survives to this day in the right of the throne to appoint the English Bishops.<sup>12</sup>

This conception of the state as the guardian and protector of the church has its closest Protestant counterpart in Lutheranism. Even more consistently than the Anglicans the Lutherans have been ready to accord the state exclusive responsibility in the sphere of social and political action. With few exceptions they have confined the function of the church to witness in the sphere of personal religion and so long as the church was assured of complete freedom in this field it has been willing to give the state its loyal support in the field of politics and economics.<sup>13</sup>

Not all Protestants have been willing to accord the state the dominant position assigned to it by the Lutherans and the Anglicans. As the Lutherans have on the whole agreed with the Orthodox in their con-

<sup>11</sup> Compare his great book *Leviathan*, the most elaborate defense in English of the divine right of kings.

<sup>12</sup> It is to be noted, however, that in the exercise of this right the king, acting through the prime minister of the time, is likely to follow the recommendation of the proper ecclesiastical authorities.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ritschl, Albrecht, *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Eng. tr. by Swing, Alice M., in *The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl* by Swing, Albert T. (New York, 1901), p. 246:

"So long, however, as statecraft has to defend the rights of a people or a state against hostility from other nations, while it is never justified in the use of criminal means to this end, it is yet not bound by the same rules which hold for the legal and ethical action of the individual Christian in his relation to the state and in intercourse with other men."

This readiness to accept a dual standard of morality so far as the state is concerned is the more striking in view of the fact that Ritschl's theology was to a much greater extent than that of a great many of his contemporaries both social and ethical.

ception of the right relation of church and state, so the Calvinistic view of that relation has many points of similarity with that of Rome. To Calvin, as well as to Hildebrand, the church was in a true sense God's representative on earth and its authority extended to all phases of man's life. It was the church's function, in obedience to God's command as made known in the Bible and interpreted by the Holy Spirit, to see that God's will was obeyed, not only in the life of the individual, but so far as is possible in society.<sup>14</sup> In countries where Calvinism has been dominant, like Scotland and the United States, the social responsibility of the church has been most strongly emphasized and its duty to act as a social conscience for the nation has been affirmed.

The authority attributed to the church has been in theory purely spiritual. Unlike the Church of Rome, the Calvinistic churches—even in their days of greatest power—have made no claim to political sovereignty. Their authority has been exercised indirectly through their reflex influence upon the political organization. But there have been times (as in the Scotland of Knox and in Puritan New England) when that influence has been so dominating as to make political resistance all but hopeless.

With the rise and growing influence of a purely secular philosophy we find the question of the relation of state and church entering upon a new phase. The presuppositions which in the older period were

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Harkness, Georgia, *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics* (New York, 1931).

common to all the parties in the debate are now for many persons no longer present. Today the question is no longer what divine authority attaches to the church as distinct from the state but whether the very conception of divine authority has any longer any meaning. To the thought of contemporary humanism, as we have seen, church and state are alike purely human creations, to be accepted or rejected, supplemented or criticized, according as they advance or retard human welfare.

This change of attitude is in part accounted for by the change which has taken place within Protestantism through its acceptance of the present denominational system. Where one church is recognized as having rightful authority, that church can fight its battle with the state more effectively. But when, as today, the church that confronts the state is not one, but many, it is natural for the state to see in each of its competing rivals only one more of the many civil institutions with which it is its function to deal.

Under these conditions the task of the apologist for the church becomes a different one. It is not to vindicate for the church its right to authority in some particular sphere as opposed to the rival authority of the state. It is rather to show that in this world where science has put into man's hands such stupendous powers man still has needs which no merely human agency can satisfy. It is, in a word, to vindicate for the church its immemorial claim to mediate the divine life to man.

### 3. WHAT THE WORLD HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT OF THE CHURCH

What then has the world a right to ask of the church? What has the church to give which no other institution can supply?

The humanist has a very definite answer to this question. The church, he believes, has nothing to give which could not be given as well by any other institution which would undertake to do what the church is now doing.

This does not mean that the church has not much to give. There are extremists, to be sure, who see in the church only a public liability, but they are in the minority. Most sensible humanists realize that the church is doing many excellent things in the field of education, in the field of philanthropy, in the field of general culture. Were the church to be destroyed, it would be necessary to create some other organization to take its place. But the things the church is doing, so they believe, could be done by any properly constituted human society. They do not wish to destroy the church, but to refashion it into a comprehensive welfare organization which shall unite in a practicable program all those who love and would serve their fellowmen.<sup>15</sup>

There is no doubt that the church has a responsibility for such service. One of the reasons why so many good Christians in Germany have supported

<sup>15</sup> Sellars, R. W., *Religion Coming of Age* (New York, 1928), pp. 286 *seq.* Cf. also Dewey, John, *A Common Faith* (New Haven, 1934), pp. 82 *seq.*



the demand for a single national church is their belief that in the past those charged with the leadership of the church have not adequately realized their social responsibility. The church in Germany they contend has been a church of officials, a pastor's church, not a church of the people. Any one who realizes the width of the gulf between church and people in pre-war Germany must sympathize with the desire of many earnest Germans to have a church in closer touch with the living issues that interest the whole people. Least of all are Americans in a position to criticize this desire, however much they may condemn many of the methods which have been used to bring about the desired change.

But a program for the church which confines its responsibilities to the betterment of existing conditions does not satisfy radical thinkers. They believe that the world has a right to ask of the church more than palliatives. If the church is to fulfill its mission, they insist, it must take the lead in a campaign for thoroughgoing social readjustment, a campaign that will put an end to the present capitalistic system with its ruthless competition and its bitter class warfare and will bring in the new co-operative commonwealth in which there shall be work for every one and where brotherhood shall be a fact and not only a name.

There are many within the church who are not ready for so radical a program. For one thing they are not persuaded that the new system, which it is proposed to substitute, will in fact prove to be more

effective and beneficent than the old. For another they do not believe that, even if all the hopes of the radicals were justified, the church is the proper organization to bring about the needed change. They do not think that it possesses the needed qualifications either in knowledge or in experience. Moreover they fear that the bitterness which the effort to realize so radical a change will bring about will have moral consequences even more disastrous than the evils it attempts to remedy.

Yet they, too, realize that something more radical is needed—a message to the heart of man that will assure him that he is a child of God called to an eternal destiny. Nor are they content with a conception of the church's position which confines its responsibility solely to ministering to the individual soul. They recognize that the church has a social mission as well. But they believe that it should build upon present foundations and conserve all that is good in the old.

So in the church the old contest perpetuates itself between the conservatives who believe in bettering the present system and the radicals who are determined to destroy it. What under these conditions has the world a right to expect of the church? What service, being what it is and believing what it does, is the church in a position to render?

One thing, at least, the world has a right to expect of the church: an example of the power of religion to inspire and to transform; and this not in the lives of isolated individuals only, but in the sphere of the

church's corporate life; in a word, the illustration, within the territory which the church can control, of the results which may be expected to follow when faith in God and loyalty to Christ bear their appropriate fruits in the spirit of man.

There is nothing new in this. It is what the world has always hoped for from the church, what it has always had the right to expect. But today we are facing conditions which give this hope more than ordinary significance and make the service which the church might render of incomparable importance.

It is a commonplace to say that we are confronting a crisis in our Western civilization. But it will help us little to see this unless we understand the causes which have produced the present tension and perceive what course of action it demands of us.

There are two respects in which the present crisis differs from others which have preceded it: it differs in the number of persons whom it affects; it differs still more in the fact that they lack a unifying philosophy. Both are by-products of the modern scientific movement which, while it has put unimaginable practical powers in the hands of men, has weakened the hold of the spiritual authorities to which in the past they have given their allegiance.

On the night of the 31st of July, 1914, I found myself in company with a little group of fellow-Americans in the American Embassy in Paris. We had gone to consult the Ambassador as to the bearing of the world situation upon our personal plans.

We found Mr. Herrick in a sober mood. He had

just learned, what was not then known to the public, that the German Ambassador had handed in his passports and that war was inevitable. After giving us the needed advice, he began to put into words some of the thoughts to which the experiences of the day had given birth. "All day long," he said, "I have been wondering whether what I have been seeing to-day is the opening of the first chapter in the story of the decline and fall of Western civilization. We say: These things have happened in the past. But we have grown stronger and wiser. They cannot happen to us. But that was what the Romans said. Yet their days were numbered. It took 300 years before the fall of the Empire was complete. But the end was inevitable from the beginning. I wonder whether it will be so with us."

The question which Mr. Herrick then raised others had been asking before him. In 1926 a German scholar named Spengler published a book which has had a wide sale. He called it *The Decline of the West*.<sup>16</sup> His thesis was that civilizations, like trees, have a natural term of life and when that term has been fulfilled their end is certain. And as there are signs which enable us to predict the life of a tree, so there are signs by which we can measure the rise and decay of civilizations. Such signs Spengler believed that his study of our present civilization had revealed to him, and the conclusion which he drew was that its period of decay was already far advanced.

Whether or no we agree with Spengler that our

<sup>16</sup> Spengler, Oswald (New York, 1926-1928).

Western civilization is doomed or with Mr. Herrick still keep an open mind, there are few who will deny that it is facing a crisis of unexampled magnitude. That crisis is not simply material, a matter of economic distress and political rivalry. It has its roots in the spirit of man. The old faiths have been rudely challenged, the old certainties gone, and in the effort to find some satisfying object to replace them men and nations are predisposed to revolutionary experiment. The struggles of class with class, the rivalry of nation with nation, the Great War itself, are not causes merely. They are effects. They are symptoms of a spiritual hunger, passionate protests against moral destitution, blind gropings after new faith yet to be born.

Here is the opportunity of the Christian church. If faith is what men lack, let the church show that it possesses a faith that satisfies. If the kind of life which men and nations have embraced leads to unhappiness and disaster, let the church show that it knows a better way. In a world of strife, external and internal, let the church demonstrate that there is one field at least in which mankind is really one.

#### 4. THE TRAGEDY OF OUR DIVIDED CHRISTIANITY

Of all the tragedies of our contemporary society, this is the most poignant, that the institution which of all institutions should set an example of unity is itself divided. It is divided outwardly by its denominational organization, each of its constituent

members being able to represent only a minority of Christians. It is divided inwardly by differences of conviction, real or supposed, which inhibit common action even in the field where the church is in complete control.

If we ask what ails the world today considered as a political organization, it is the fact that when we pass the national frontier there is no law but the law of the jungle. Nation confronts nation with its claim of unlimited sovereignty, and when strife arises there is no way of settling disputes except by war. The League of Nations, the World Court, noble as are the ideals they express, are hardly more than aspirations without universal validity or compelling force.

What is the church doing today to cope with this situation? In word much, in deed little. The church professes to be an international institution, worldwide in its authority. But in fact so far as organization is concerned the church is even less effectively united than the state. We have not only the fundamental cleavage between Catholics and Protestants to which our present study is devoted, but even within Protestantism we find no effective unity.

In their relation to the state the existing Protestant churches fall into no less than four different categories: (1) those which as national churches, recognized by the state, accept at its hands a privileged position not granted to other Protestant bodies in the same country; (2) those whose legal position is that of non-conformist bodies in a state which accords such a position of privilege to a particular

church; (3) those which as free corporations within a state enjoy such privileges, and such only, as are granted to other educational and philanthropic institutions in that state; (4) those which as minority bodies in countries where the dominant influence is unchristian, if not anti-Christian, receive their support from churches in other countries and are to that extent controlled by them.<sup>17</sup>

In such a situation it is inevitable that the moral authority of the church should be weakened. In countries where there is a state church the energy of the nonconformist bodies is too often dissipated in the effort to secure for themselves the status of equality to which as branches of the one church of Christ they believe themselves entitled. In countries where the church derives its financial support from the citizens of another country (as on the mission field) its effectiveness as an agency of evangelism and of so-

<sup>17</sup> Examples of the first kind are the Church of England, the churches of the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Holland), and until recently of Germany. Examples of the second class are the free churches in countries where there is a state church, whether Protestant (as in Great Britain and in countries where Lutheranism is the state religion), Orthodox (as in Russia before the War and the Balkan countries and Greece today), or Roman Catholic (as in Austria before the War and in Italy under Mussolini as a result of the recent Concordat). Such too, so far as they are tolerated at all, is the position of the Protestant bodies in Russia; though here the established religion, if one may be permitted the paradox, is atheism and the state an active opponent of Christianity in every form. Examples of the third group are the Protestant churches of the United States, of France, and of the other members of the British Commonwealth. Examples of the fourth class are the various national churches on the mission field, *e.g.*, the Church of China, of India, and of Japan, as well as those Protestant bodies which, while having their membership and their religious life in the East, are in theory and in their form of government constituent members of Western Protestant bodies.



cial service is weakened by the fact that to its fellow-countrymen who are not Christians it appears as the exponent of a foreign religion. Even in those countries where in theory all churches are free and equal the lack of a single central authority makes prompt and effective action difficult. When a crisis arises which involves the liberty of the church, as in Germany today, there is no recognized body which can speak for the church as a whole.

What is true of the relation of church and state is true to a greater or less degree of all those social issues where a united witness is needed. Something can be done—not a little is in fact being done—through co-operative bodies like the Federal Council and the local federations of churches. But these agencies, useful as they are, are weakened by the fact that in all important matters reference to the constituent bodies is necessary and there is no way in which this reference can be promptly made. This weakness appears most clearly in such a matter as public education. Here the failure of the state in certain countries to make any place in the system of public education for religious instruction may easily lead to a policy which under the guise of neutrality gives to education in fact a positively secular, if not a distinctly anti-religious, bias.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This is the situation in the United States, where in recent years the rise of the state university has given publicly supported institutions a constantly increasing influence in the formation of public opinion, but where, alone among all civilized countries, the principle of the separation of church and state has been so interpreted as with slight exceptions to make no place in higher education for the teaching of religion.



Serious as they are, these difficulties would not prove fatal if, in their inner life, all Christians were at one. But this is only in part true. We have seen that beside the outward divisions, in part their cause, in part their consequence, there are differences in the conception of the Christian revelation and of its consequences for the life of men. These differences affect the view of the church and of its place in the purpose of God. Where one view obtains, the church is thought of as the primary organ of divine revelation, so that rejection of its authority becomes disobedience to God. Where another view obtains God is thought of as dealing with the individual directly and the church comes into existence through the association of many redeemed personalities.

Nor are these intellectual differences the only, or even the most serious, divisive factors. Even where in theory Christians agree, they are not always found working together. There are private and personal reasons which keep them apart: love of place and of power, desire for ease and for comfort, all the familiar faults against which the Christian preacher is always warning. These moral failings, more than any defects of outward organization, hinder the witness of the church and limit the effectiveness of its service. It is because of these that the world fails to see in the church that which it has most of all the right to expect—a living illustration of the power of the gospel to transform social as well as individual life. Let the unity in which all Christians profess to believe show itself in appropriate action and the

church will become again, what the world so sorely needs, a power-house to which all who need new strength and courage in their struggle for a better world can turn for reinforcement and inspiration.

We are brought face to face here with a fact which is a commonplace of vital religion but which in our engrossment with other matters we too often ignore—that in this matter of Christian unity, as in all other phases of the religious life, the real enemy against which as Christians we are called to contend is sin, and the place where conflict must begin is with the sin in our own lives. How can we expect God to give us light on the differences which still separate us, when we fail to yield him obedience at the point where light has already come.

This conviction has been the inspiration of the present book. We have been studying an old theme, but from a new angle, and with a new purpose. Our theme has been the differences that separate Catholics and Protestants: our purpose to discover how far these differences grow out of differing philosophies of life such that when they are sincerely held loyalty to truth requires divergent courses of action; how far they are due to moral causes which must be dealt with by repentance before further progress is possible. So far as the divisive factors have been shown to be intellectual rather than moral we have tried to discover how far they concern matters of theory alone, on which men may differ without breach of fellowship; how far matters so basic that so long as they remain they make spiritual commu-

nion impossible. It is the author's conviction that while differences of the latter kind exist, and it would be futile to minimize their importance, they are not our most formidable obstacles. He believes, on the contrary, that, in spite of existing differences, there exists a field of agreement in which, if we were true to our professed convictions, common action would be possible, and that till that action has been taken, further discussion of differences must remain unfruitful.

*PART IV (CONTINUED)*  
*THE CHURCH, CATHOLIC AND*  
*PROTESTANT*

**CHAPTER XIII**

**WHAT PROTESTANTS CAN LEARN FROM CATHOLICS**

1. What to Do with Our Differences When Found.
2. Where Protestants Can Learn from Catholics.
3. What Protestants Would Do Well to Appropriate.
4. What Protestants Would Be Wise to Avoid.
5. The Opportunity and the Responsibility of the Anglo-Catholic.

*In view of the situation analyzed in the preceding chapters it becomes important to distinguish among the many differences which separate Protestants and Catholics those which are temporary or unimportant from those which express deep-seated (and for the time insuperable) differences of conviction. Whatever may be our ultimate attitude toward these more formidable differences, it seems clear that there is an area in which Catholics and Protestants may learn much from one another.*

*Protestants may learn from Catholics the number and variety of the different kinds of people who together make up the church, the need of giving scope to the exceptional spirit, and the importance of the time factor in human life. From the Orthodox, Protestants may learn the large place which beauty must play in the worship of God; from the Roman Catholic what are the right uses of authority and how important it is to make use of the specialist in religion.*

*Again the Protestant may learn from the Catholic the futility of trying to purify religion by subtraction. He may be led to raise the question whether in rejecting the principle of tradition as an organ of revelation and in limiting the number of the sacraments from seven to two, Protestantism did not suffer loss as well as gain. So it is a fair question whether sainthood should not hold a larger place in Protestant piety than has often been given it in the past.*

*On all these points the Anglo-Catholic might do much to help the Protestant if he would be true to the protestant element in his own type of religious experience.*

## 1. WHAT TO DO WITH OUR DIFFERENCES WHEN FOUND

When we consider our existing differences in the light of the preceding analysis we find that they fall into three main groups—those which are the result of misunderstanding, which fuller knowledge may remove; those which, while genuine and significant as far as they go, are yet consistent with sincere fellowship and admit of common action; and those which have to do with such deep-seated differences of conviction as, for the time, to make both fellowship and action alike impossible.

It is clear that these differences require different treatment. With those of the first and the second class something can be done at once. If our differences are based on misunderstanding, clearly it is our duty by further conference to remove them. If, though real, they are not so serious as to inhibit common action, then it is our duty to create the agencies through which that action can take place.

Along both these lines the movement for unity has made notable progress. We have discovered that many of the things which we thought were insuperable obstacles to unity are not really so, but are the result of misunderstanding which more accurate knowledge can remove. We have learned that—even when differences are real, and concern important matters, matters as important as those which separate

Catholics and Protestants—they may yet be consistent with mutual respect, with common worship, and with common action. And we have taken the first steps—very halting and imperfect steps, to be sure—to create the agencies through which these new insights may be followed by appropriate conduct.

The most important of the attempts to deal with the difficulties which are the result of imperfect knowledge is that taken by the World Conference on Faith and Order. As a result of the discussions carried on by that body many misunderstandings which have kept Catholics and Protestants apart have been removed, and a basis of mutual confidence and respect has been laid, which is of large promise for the future.<sup>1</sup>

The most important attempt to deal with the differences that inhibit common action is that taken by the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. Following the precedent set by the various national federations and federal councils, the continuation committee of this Conference has created in Geneva a central agency through which the non-Roman churches can function together when the will for such action is present. Established in September, 1929, with meagre resources and a limited personnel, it has already a significant record of service to its credit.<sup>2</sup>

Thus far the two movements, represented by the Lausanne and Stockholm Conferences, have functioned separately. But with each passing year the

<sup>1</sup> *Faith and Order: Lausanne, 1927*, ed. by Bate, H. N. (New York, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> Bell, G. K. A., *The Stockholm Conference on Life and Work, 1925* (London, 1926).

limits of what can be done by such a divided approach become more clearly apparent. The more one endeavors in a purely objective way to find what are the existing obstacles to union between Protestants and Catholics the more clearly it appears that they are not simply matters of belief or forms of organization, but that they have their roots in differing types of religious experience. The more one studies the reasons which prevent common action—even in the field where all agree that such action is desirable—the more clearly it appears that the real obstacle to unity, even in the practical field, is found in different conceptions of God's will for his church which have their roots in differing philosophies of life.

So we are brought to the third class of differences—the most serious and baffling of all: those which are the result of differences of conviction so deep-seated as for the time at least to make full fellowship and common action alike impossible. That such differences exist we have already seen. Where they exist it is futile to ignore them. But the problem which they raise is very different from that which is presented by differences of the first two classes, for it involves a time factor which is not present to the same degree in them.

Before, therefore, we attempt to consider how far the deeper differences which separate Protestants from Catholics are likely to prove permanently divisive, we shall do well to study with some care the area in which mutual sympathy and common action are possible now. This, when impartially examined, will



prove to be both broader and more significant than is commonly recognized. At many points where until recently Protestants and Catholics have held aloof from one another fellowship is beginning, and there are lessons which each group may profitably learn from the other.

## 2. WHERE PROTESTANTS CAN LEARN FROM CATHOLICS

There are two ways in which we may learn from one another. One is by finding out what good things our neighbors possess which we lack. The other is by learning from the mistakes they have made what are the dangers against which we need to be on our guard. Along both these lines the study of Catholicism has much to teach the Protestant.

For one thing, it can teach him how many kinds of people make up humanity and how impossible it is to make them all conform to a single type. The Reformers were right in protesting against the double standard, with its depreciation of the secular virtues and its exaltation of the monastic ideal. But they did not sufficiently take account of the facts of human nature which had given birth to monasticism or of the need to which it gives expression. In principle to be sure there can be but one ideal for the Christian, namely, the life of holy love of which Christ has set the example. But the ways of realizing that ideal are as numerous as the gifts and capacities of men. The church that is wise will make provision for these dif-

ferent needs and capacities in its opportunities for service. Here the Catholic Church, through its Orders, has shown a resourcefulness which Protestants on the whole have lacked. In their effort to keep their ideal high, Protestants have tried to standardize the religious life, and, like all who try to simplify too much, have found that man's many-sided life could not be contained within the moulds they had prepared. In Protestantism too—as the Salvation Army and more recently the Group Movement has shown—there is room for smaller units with stricter discipline and more exacting standards; volunteers ready for any task, and with the freedom from human ties which makes effective action possible.

As Protestantism has often failed to provide an adequate outlet for the exceptional spirit, so it has had too little patience with the weakness of the rank and file. We have seen that much Catholic piety impresses the Protestant as superstitious. Under Christian names and with the church's blessing he sees heathen practices persisting: fables retold as sober history, symbols confused with the reality they represent. He sees the church adapting its teaching to the capacities of different classes of people, having one teaching for the scholar and another for the man on the street: one rule for the monk and the nun, another for the husband and the wife. Thus wherever he looks he sees compromise, great claims contradicted by in-different practice.

What he often fails to see is the reason which leads the Catholic to do what he does. Intelligent Catholics

are not blind to the superstitions and weaknesses of existing Catholicism, but they have a clearer perception than most Protestants of the weakness and ignorance of human nature and of the need of patience in dealing with them. If the church is to be really Catholic, that is universal in its appeal, then it must be able to deal with men as they are. And when they are simple and ignorant then the methods the church uses must be correspondingly simple. Enough if contacts can be made that will lift men one step higher. What the fathers fail to see today, the children may learn tomorrow.

The Catholic can remind the Protestant of the importance of the time factor in human life. A reforming religion, such as Protestantism professes to be, must necessarily make much of crisis. And crisis has its importance both in the life of the individual and of society. But man cannot live by crisis alone. After the break has been made the gain needs to be consolidated. And this means education. The direction of the will may have been changed, but the content of the mind still remains what it was until a new experience supplies new material. This new material, the response of a growing nature to a great truth, at first imperfectly apprehended, is what the Catholic means by tradition.

For the modern Protestant of all men this ought to be the most obvious of truths. Yet it is to be feared that not all Protestants have appreciated its full bearing upon the older Protestant position. In theory Protestants reject the principle of tradition. They

deny that God's later teaching can add anything essential to the truth revealed in the New Testament. But in fact Protestantism has developed its own tradition, paralleling at many points that of the Catholic Church. If that tradition has not added any new principle to the Christian Gospel as given in the New Testament, it has at least provided applications of the Gospel so novel as to become in effect a new revelation. This inconsistency between theory and practice is one of the weaknesses of contemporary Protestantism. One thing that modern Protestants may wisely learn from their Catholic fellow-Christians is that since tradition is inevitable it is well to recognize the fact and to provide for it in one's doctrine of religious authority.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. WHAT PROTESTANTS WOULD DO WELL TO APPROPRIATE

These things lie more or less upon the surface. They mark the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism in all its forms. But the Catholic has more specific lessons to teach the Protestant. One lesson is of the ministry of beauty to the religious life. This is the special contribution of Orthodoxy to ecumenical Christianity. Protestantism, being a reforming religion, has been comparatively indifferent

<sup>3</sup> The root of this failure lies in the identification of truth with changelessness. There is truth and falsehood in this identification. God is changeless in his character and in his purpose, but his activity is continually changing, while man's understanding of those activities is limited by his own imperfection. Hence the double need of tradition as (1) an interpretation of the old revelation and (2) the supply of new material to be interpreted.

to God's revelation through beauty. Where it has not actively opposed the arts, it has been slow to make use of their services for religion. What the world has lost through the iconoclasm of the Puritans is a familiar story. What the world is losing today through the barrenness of many of our Protestant church buildings is less generally recognized. A church is indeed a place of meeting and its ministry to social fellowship is not to be despised. But to make of the church simply a meeting-house is to forget its supreme office, which is to furnish a fitting shrine for the worship of the eternal. In this worship all man's powers should unite. God who is the all-beautiful, as well as the all-righteous and the all-loving, cannot be worthily approached through a service which makes no place for one of his noblest gifts to man.

Sense then must have its place with spirit in the worship of God. In theory, Protestants have recognized this in making place for the sacraments side by side with the Word. In practice they have never drawn the full consequence of this recognition. Their symbolism has been the symbolism of the word rather than of the act. But actions often speak louder than words. Great living is always dramatic, and religion that is to be great must have its dramatic features. It must appeal to eye as well as to ear and make use of hand as well as of lips. Catholics well understand this. The Mass is nothing if not drama and in its ministry every sense has its part to play. By contrast the worship of the Protestant impresses the Catholic as too academic, too intellectual. The sermon has its place in the

church, and a great place at that; but preaching is not the whole of the service of worship, nor is it the most important part.

It is unfortunate therefore that in many Protestant theological seminaries little or no attention is given to the liturgical treasures of the Catholic Church. In the great hymns which celebrate the sacrament, more surely and more directly than from a study of the official creeds, one is introduced into the inner shrine of Catholic piety. There one comes to understand how in this symbolic action—symbol to eye and ear, but to faith the means through which the living Christ makes his presence manifest—the participant is brought face to face with eternal reality, the God-head sharing man's experience of sorrow and limitation so that by willing participation in human suffering he may make man a sharer in his glorious and immortal life.

“At birth our brother he became;  
At meat himself as food he gives;  
To ransom us he died in shame;  
As our reward, in bliss he lives.

O saving Victim! open wide  
The gate of heaven to man below!  
Sore press our foes from every side;  
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.”<sup>4</sup>

There too he will learn how belief in the objective efficacy of the sacrament (its functioning *ex opere operato*) may be consistent with the most sensitive

<sup>4</sup> *The Inner Court* (New York, 1924), p. 164.

appreciation of the moral qualities necessary for its effective reception.

"Our new Paschal offering

Brings to end the olden rite;  
Here, for empty shadows fled,  
Is Reality instead;  
Here, instead of darkness,  
Light.

. . . . .  
Hear what holy Church maintaineth,  
That the bread its substance changeth  
Into Flesh, the wine to Blood.  
Doth it pass thy comprehending?  
Faith, the law of sight transcending,  
Leaps to things not understood.

Here, in outward signs are hidden  
Priceless things, to sense forbidden;  
Signs, not things, are all we see;  
Flesh from bread, and  
Blood from wine;  
Yet is Christ in either sign,

All entire, confessed to be.

. . . . .  
Both the wicked and the good  
Eat of this celestial Food;  
But with ends how opposite!  
Here 'tis life; and there 'tis death;  
The same, yet issuing to each  
In a difference infinite." <sup>5</sup>

It is therefore a happy augury that in Protestant circles the practice of early morning Communion is

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-167.

being revived. In this quiet service to which only those come who are constrained by the call of inner need there is an intimacy of appeal which makes it an inestimable privilege to those who are facing difficult problems and carrying heavy responsibilities.

If the Protestant can learn from the Orthodox what is the ministry of beauty, the Roman Catholic can remind him of the place of authority in religion. As a reformer the Protestant is apt to think of authority primarily as a bond that limits his freedom. He tends to forget that it may also be a guide that directs his activity. If there is one thing more than another which we can learn from the present crisis of democracy, it is that there is something in man that responds to command. "Oh, that some one would tell us what we must do!" On this deep need of man the claim of Rome to rule the spirit of man is built. Protestants do right to protest against authority when it is imposed from without. They confess their bankruptcy when to the soul that asks for guidance they can give no clear response.

Again, the Catholic can remind us of our need of discipline. Protestantism has set its ideal for man high, and in this it has been right. It has not measured adequately the difficulty of realizing the ideal or the need of discipline if one is to make the ascent successfully. This necessity the Catholic never forgets. For the highest as well as for the lowest he insists that it is needed. Even the Pope must have his confessor.

The methods used have often been crude, and Protestants have been right in rejecting them; but



they have done little to fill the empty place. Wesley did something by his institution of the class leader. The Salvation Army has done something by its adoption of military methods. For the most part Protestants have assumed that prayer was a simple matter and each person could be trusted to practise it in his own way. There has been no rule to which one was asked to conform, and when a rule has been self-imposed there has been no one to see whether it had in fact been observed. So for many Protestants prayer has become a forgotten art and the earnest spirits of our day are buying Catholic books of devotion that they may learn again how to practise the presence of God.

At least one thing more the Roman Catholic can teach the Protestant, and that is the importance of the specialist in religion. In principle Protestantism recognizes this in its institution of the regular ministry. In its earlier history the teacher was associated with minister, presbyter, and deacon as a distinct order of the ministry. But in the main Protestantism has left the church's work to the pastor. When the exigencies of the missionary task have forced the creation of new offices, such as secretaries of boards or state superintendents, they have too often been regarded as a necessary evil. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is elected annually and any suggestion that so august an office requires the undivided time of a full-time man would be regarded as an unwarranted intrusion of ecclesiastical autocracy. In the Depart-

ment of Research of the Federal Council of Churches, besides the office staff, only one person is giving his full time; in the International Research Department at Geneva, two. The Action Populaire in Paris, the corresponding organ for French Catholics, commands the services of nineteen full-time Fathers. It is small wonder that our contemporary Protestant way of doing things impresses the average Roman Catholic as somewhat amateurish, and that it is hard for him to realize that we are quite in earnest about our religion.

#### 4. WHAT PROTESTANTS WOULD BE WISE TO AVOID

But it is not only by way of example that the Catholic can help the Protestant. He can show him certain dangers which should be avoided.

For one thing he can remind him of the futility of trying to purify religion by subtraction.

Protestantism was born of a great insight. In an age which had broken up the religious life into a multitude of different doctrines and virtues, things to be believed and things to be done, it recovered again the central truth of the Gospel that one thing alone matters—a faith which bears fruit in love. With this principle as criterion it undertook to reappraise its Catholic inheritance, appropriating what conformed to this principle and rejecting what did not.

The process was difficult; time was short; and the pressure of instant need made quick decision imperative. So the reforming spirit, finding the re-

thinking of the whole too difficult, made use of methods which promised an easier and speedier solution. Where the scandals were most acute it used the surgeon's knife rather than the doctor's elixir. Was tradition corrupt; cut it off. Were the sacraments encrusted with superstition; for seven substitute two. Was the worship of Mary and the saints ousting Jesus from his rightful place in the affection of the faithful; remove their statues and destroy their pictures. Let Jesus again stand alone, as he stood in solitary grandeur in the opening years of his ministry before the Christian Church had begun to be.

Tradition, as we have seen, is not so easily displaced. God has not been idle since Jesus taught in Palestine, and his later teaching through his church is a precious heritage to which Protestant as well as Catholic is heir. This heritage Protestantism has in fact made its own, as a study of the worship of the church has abundantly shown us. But the theory of the church makes no place for its practice and gives point to Chillingworth's well-known dictum: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, the religion of Protestants."

The reduction of the number of sacraments from seven to two has a relative justification when considered as a measure of necessary reform. As a theological principle it rests upon a method of Biblical interpretation which it is difficult to defend. To Jesus all nature was sacramental and his choice of the simplest of God's gifts which lay ready to hand—water, bread, wine—as vehicles for his most spiritual

teaching pointed not to a reduction of the range of the sacramental principle but to its extension. The Catholic recognizes this when he associates with the sacraments in the narrower sense other symbolic acts, the so-called sacramentals, to which he attaches religious character. The Friends carry the principle to its logical conclusion when they insist that to the Christian all life should be sacramental.

Fortunately the practice of Protestants has proved better than their theory. In theory Protestants have denied sacramental character to confirmation, to marriage, and to ordination. In their practice, still more in the experience of those who have participated in them, they have recognized that all three were in the deepest sense sacramental.

At no point is the contrast between Catholic and Protestant more apparent, at no point is the tension more acute than in the attitude taken toward Mary and the saints. To Protestants the invocation of saints, however explained and restricted, has seemed blasphemous and its rejection a necessary condition of maintaining the unique distinction and final supremacy of Jesus. But here too it is a fair question whether the way of subtraction has not been a mistake. Jesus did not regard his work as finished at his death. He anticipated for his disciples, through his living Spirit, a continuing ministry. "The works that I do," he said, "ye shall do also; and greater works than these shall ye do; because I go unto my Father."<sup>6</sup> The Catholic Church has taken these words seriously,

<sup>6</sup> John 14:12.

and it has been right to do so. But it has not taken them seriously enough. It has been right in venerating the saints and giving them their place as living members in the one church. It has been wrong in limiting sainthood to those recognized by the official church and failing to include the many saintly spirits through whom Christ's spirit has been at work in every walk of life.<sup>7</sup>

All these errors spring from a common root. They are the result of the application of quantitative methods to religion. But religion is not a matter of more or less. It differs from the rest of life not in degree, but in kind. Religion introduces into human life a new spirit. It transvalues human values through a new relationship. In religion man no longer stands alone. He is God's creature; more than this, he is God's son.

This was the new insight Jesus brought, and with it he banished forever all legal categories in religion. The Biblical writers saw this clearly, none more clearly than St. Paul. By the law, Paul insists, no man can be saved. And Protestantism owed its first victories to Luther's re-affirmation of the Pauline Gospel. But, as time went on, and the freshness of the first insight faded, the older ways of thinking and feeling again made their presence felt. So the second generation of Protestants made conformity to the teaching of the reformers a test of orthodoxy, and under the guise of fidelity to the truth a new legalism

<sup>7</sup> The propriety of this larger reference is recognized in principle by the Roman Church in its observance of All Saints' Day.

sprang up, without the excuse or the dignity of the old. The creeds of the church took the place of the Bible as the supreme authority and for those who refused to conform there was always the heresy trial with its resulting excommunication.

This is not the Protestant way to deal with differences of conviction. For the Protestant there is but one final authority—God's living Spirit speaking to the conscience of the individual through his Word, as that Word is interpreted to each generation in the light of the enlarging experience of those who have already made proof of it. Where Protestantism has departed from this principle, it has been weak. Where it has kept true to it, it has been strong.

##### 5. THE OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC

There is thus much that the Protestant can learn from the Catholic—much that without sacrifice of principle he can take over from his Catholic heritage. But for this contact must be made and there are as yet far too few opportunities for contact. In movements like those which originated at Lausanne and Stockholm the leaders of the non-Roman churches at least are meeting with happy results in the way of personal friendship and understanding. For the average Protestant, Catholicism is still a *terra incognita*, unknown and therefore suspect.

Here is the great opportunity of the Anglo-Catholic. For both in his type of mind and in his personal

relationships he has points of contact with Protestants which other Catholics, Orthodox, or Roman, lack.

He has a point of contact in his type of mind. For he too is a protestant, daring, if need be, to set his private judgment against the decision of his ecclesiastical superiors. He does this, to be sure, in the interest of what he understands to be Catholic tradition, and in protest against what he regards as a Protestant corruption of the primitive deposit of faith. But it is *his* understanding of that tradition which determines his action; and *his* conscience which constrains him to protest when he believes that wrong has been done.

He has a point of contact further in his personal relationships. For he is a member of a church which stands in the Protestant as well as in the Catholic tradition; which indeed, in one of its important branches, has retained the name Protestant in its official title. He is associated therefore with persons who are by conviction Protestant, not only through the occasional contacts furnished by such meetings as those at Lausanne and at Stockholm, but in the daily ministry of public worship and of private devotion. His presence in such a church as the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States is the conclusive proof that, in spite of all difficulties, it is possible for Protestants and Catholics to work together.

In his conception of Christian service, as well as in his worship, the Anglo-Catholic has much in common

with the evangelical Protestant. Like him he believes that love of God must bear fruit in love of man. Like him he believes that Christian love cannot stop with the individual, but must embrace all human relationships. Like him therefore he regards it as a Christian duty to work not only for the salvation of the individual, but for the reconstruction of society.<sup>8</sup>

Who, then, should be so well fitted to interpret to the Protestant the treasures of his Catholic inheritance? Who should be so eager to share with his Protestant fellow-worshipper the sacramental worship which has meant so much to him?

And yet it would not be too much to say that there is no type of Christian with whom the average Protestant finds it more difficult to feel at home than with the Anglo-Catholic. For he seems here to find Catholic practice combined with an intolerance for which the Anglo-Catholic position furnishes no adequate theoretical foundation. The intolerance of Rome he can understand for it is based upon a theory of the church which denies even the measure of private judgment which the Anglo-Catholic claims for himself. The limitations which his creed imposes upon the Orthodox he can accept in good part since here too he recognizes that they have theoretical foundation. But that the Anglo-Catholic should refuse fellowship with other Protestants he finds it hard to understand.

The more he has himself gained some insight into the beauty and richness of Catholic religion, the

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Kenyon, Ruth, *Catholic Faith and the Industrial Order* (London, 1931); Peck, W. G., *The Social Implications of the Oxford Movement* (New York, 1933).



more difficult it becomes for him to understand. If Christianity be in truth what the Anglo-Catholic believes it to be, then he should be eager to share it with those who have lost or who have never as yet fully appropriated its excellencies, and for this he must multiply his opportunities of contact, not only in service, but in worship.

From this point of view the barriers which now prevent many Anglo-Catholics from common participation in the communion with members of the non-Episcopal churches seem peculiarly unfortunate. For where, if not at the table of their Lord, can Christians of different types of religious experience learn to know one another; or where, if the Catholic conception of the sacrament be the true one, will that truth be more patently manifest than when it is offered to those who, coming in humility and faith desire to partake of it?

We are brought again to the fundamental issue which underlies all the discussion between Catholics and Protestants, this issue namely, whether the Church of Christ is primarily a legal institution endowed by its founder with a definite constitution and laws to which all who have a right to the name Christian must conform or whether it is primarily a fellowship whose bond of union is a common spirit—a spirit which expresses itself in definite beliefs and practices to be sure, but which is not to be identified with these, since, like every spiritual reality, it is constantly giving birth to new forms both of thought and of organization.

The last thing the Anglo-Catholic desires is to think of the church as a legal institution. It was the desire to recover again a vivid sense of the spiritual nature of the church which inspired Newman and his fellows of the Oxford Movement, and that purpose has remained central ever since. Yet the conception of the church which the Anglo-Catholic holds gives to its laws as he understands them a rigidity which limits his fellowship and hinders him in his great task of interpreting the treasures of his Catholic faith and experience to others.

It is greatly to be hoped therefore that some way will be found—consistent with the laws of the church—to make possible, not simply without but within the church and as part of its divinely appointed function, more frequent contact between Anglo-Catholics and their fellow-Christians of other Protestant communions that through the sharing of their personal religious experience their understanding of Christ may be enlarged and their service to those who are not Christians be made more effective.



*PART IV (CONTINUED)*

*THE CHURCH CATHOLIC AND  
PROTESTANT*

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT CATHOLICS MIGHT LEARN FROM  
PROTESTANTS

1. What All Catholics Might Learn from Protestants.
2. How Protestants May Be of Help to the Orthodox.
3. The Place of Rome in the Movement for Reunion.
4. Where Protestants and Roman Catholics Can Work Together.
5. What Protestants Must Contribute to the Reunited Church.

*Among the lessons which Catholics might learn from Protestants the following are suggested: that the church as an institution is means, not end; that unity of organization carries with it no necessary guarantee of unity of spirit; that important as are the uses of authority, they have their limits which cannot be safely overpassed; that the most effective way to win men to the faith is by the witness of a transformed life. In particular the Orthodox may learn from Protestants the need of distinguishing more clearly between the church visible and the church invisible; the importance of emphasizing the ethical implications of the Christian life; and the need of a more effective organization if the separate branches of the undivided church are really to function as one.*

*In the case of Rome the possibilities of official contact are narrower, yet even here there is an area within which co-operation is possible, e.g., in research or in social service. In informal ways, on the other hand, there are many possibilities of contact which make spiritual fellowship and common action possible.*

*One of the greatest obstacles to the effective co-operation between Catholics and Protestants is the fact that the divisions between Protestants prevent them from presenting the united front which would make co-operation easy. Of all the services which Protestantism might render to the reunion of Christendom, none would be greater than the spectacle of a reunited Protestantism.*

## 1. WHAT ALL CATHOLICS MIGHT LEARN FROM PROTESTANTS

So far the present writer has spoken as a Protestant, reporting how in his own case the study of Catholic books and fellowship with Catholic Christians have helped to remove misconceptions of Catholic teaching and pointed the way to lessons to which Protestants would be well advised to give heed. Dare he add anything concerning the Catholic attitude toward Protestants?

Here, no doubt, the Protestant reporter must speak with reserve. What he can offer is at most conjecture. He can suggest what in his judgment Catholics might learn from Protestants. Whether that judgment is well founded, it must be for them to say.

What it seems to him that Catholics might learn is in no sense the monopoly of Protestants. It is only the reminder of truths which are a part of the Catholic heritage, of dangers against which Catholic teachers have repeatedly warned.

This first of all: that however central in God's purpose may be the church as an institution, it is as means, not as end. The end is the life of the glorified saints, that society of free persons infinitely blessed whose will is perfectly conformed to the will of God. The church exists to train her children to accept what God ordains, not because they must, but because

it is their dearest desire to do so. Highest among all the church's claims to man's loyalty and affection is this, that she has been and still is the mother of saints. By its ability to meet this supreme test institutional Christianity in every form must be finally judged. Where, as has more than once happened in the history of the church, the welfare of the soul is subordinated to the institution, the protest of the Protestant will be inevitable and it will be justified.

Another thing of which the Protestant can remind the Catholic is the fact that unity of organization carries in itself no necessary guarantee of fellowship of spirit. It was in the days when the church came nearest to realizing the ideal of complete organic unity that it gave birth to those evils against which the Reformation was a protest. What reason is there for expecting that if, in the Providence of God, outward unity should again be attained, the reunited church would be any more immune against internal corruption than it was before? History has lessons to teach here which we shall neglect at our peril. Where Rome's control has been most complete its moral standards have often been lowest. Where it has been confronted by a vigorous self-conscious Protestantism its ethical and intellectual standards have correspondingly improved. In like manner it was when Orthodoxy, considered as a form of ecclesiastical organization, was most completely unchallenged that the state of Russian religion reached its lowest ebb.

The Protestant can suggest to the Catholic what

are the proper limits of authority. We have seen that Protestants have done less than justice to the spiritual need which authority satisfies. They have not appreciated as they should the help it brings to multitudes of simple people confronted with questions too difficult for them to solve alone; the relief which it furnishes to eager spirits made free by the submission of the will to a court of final appeal for tasks and problems of a more immediate and pressing character. But though this be true, it is only one side of the truth. If authority has its function, it has its limits too. Like freedom it is means, not end. It is a help which is needed by the immature. But its function is fulfilled only when it has brought them to the place where they can think and decide for themselves. Catholic Christianity has often forgotten this. Too often it has been content to leave the ignorant uninstructed if thereby its own prestige could be advanced. Too often it has limited the freedom of its scholars lest their research might lead to results which were inconvenient to those in authority. The Church of Rome has nurtured many thinkers of first-rate intellect. But its triumphs have been won at a heavy cost. To how many brilliant spirits has the Index brought the choice between a break with the church and a submission that did violence to the intellect! For what countless multitudes has the rule of Rome meant the continued tolerance of a state of ignorance and superstition which has closed the doors of knowledge against many who might have profited by it!



Above all, Catholics may be reminded by Protestants that the one sure way to win those who are strangers to the faith is by the witness of a transformed life. The great saints have known this well, and it is this that has made them saints. They were sound in the faith, as the Catholic Church reckons soundness, but it was not on this that they relied for salvation, nor for this that they have been loved by their fellow-Christians. It was their humble acceptance of God's great love as manifest in the cross of Jesus Christ; it was their resolute will to serve him at all costs through good report and evil; it was the joy that shone in their faces as for Christ's sake they endured the reproach of men, counting it their highest riches to share his sufferings who had done so much for them. If the church is to justify its claim to be spokesman for God and channel of his salvation, it is upon evidence such as this that it must rely rather than upon the effort to show that Christ committed to Peter an authority which too often in the past his successors have used for purposes hard to reconcile with the example of the Master.

These, I repeat, are not Protestant convictions only; they belong to our common Christianity. It was the effort to recover this part of their Catholic heritage which led our Protestant forefathers to break with the church they loved. The more they become dominant in the life of contemporary Catholicism the greater will be its contribution to the purified church of the future.

It is ground for encouragement, therefore, that

so many Catholics see this; that, in spite of the barrier which existing church law sets to closer fellowship, so many points of contact exist between Catholics and Protestants.

In what ways, it remains to ask, can these contacts be made more numerous and more effective?

## 2. HOW PROTESTANTS MAY BE OF HELP TO THE ORTHODOX

We must recur to the distinction which our study of Catholic Christianity has repeatedly brought before us, namely, between the attitude of Rome and that of the other Catholic bodies. It belongs to the genius of Roman Christianity that it can permit no official recognition of any other Christian communion. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, welcomes co-operation in the field of Christian life and work, while the Anglo-Catholic, since a member of a church that includes Protestants by conviction, must perforce co-operate with them both in work and in worship.

There are two characteristics of Orthodox Catholicism as we have learned to know it which furnish points of contact with Protestants not open to the Roman Catholic. One is its more tolerant and approachable spirit, the other its form of organization. Unlike Rome the Orthodox has no difficulty in recognizing Protestants as fellow-Christians with whom he can join in prayer and unite in social ministry. Unlike Rome again, there is nothing in the existence of

parallel denominations in Protestantism which seems to him inconsistent with the unity of the church. Orthodoxy knows no single all-inclusive organization. It is itself a group of autonomous communions held together by a common faith and a common worship.

But Orthodoxy as at present organized has weaknesses which contact with Protestants may help it to overcome. These weaknesses are found in its theology, in the type of life it fosters, and in the agencies through which it functions. At all these points there is something which the Orthodox might learn from Protestants.

For one thing the Orthodox might learn from Protestants the need of distinguishing more clearly between the church visible and the church invisible. This distinction, to be sure, is not confined to Protestantism. It meets us in the Church of Rome as well. By its means it becomes possible to deal with certain practical difficulties which might otherwise prove insuperable; such difficulties, for example, as the presence of sinful men within the visible church and, conversely, the discovery of pious spirits among those with no ecclesiastical connection. This anomaly theologians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, explain by reminding us that God's grace is not confined to the organized church but that wherever a man of humble and contrite spirit lifts his heart to God there is reason to hope that the divine Spirit has been at work. So the mere fact of membership in the visible church carries with it no neces-

sary guarantee of salvation. Priests as well as laymen may fall into mortal sin. Even to be Pope carries with it no assurance of eternal salvation.

These facts are recognized by the Orthodox as well as by other Christians. But Orthodoxy has no way of dealing with them consistently, for its theology makes no distinction between the church visible and the church invisible. The only church the Orthodox recognize is the church we see with its ecumenical faith, its historic liturgy and its episcopal organization. How the contrast between the divine ideal for the church and the imperfect lives of many of its ministers is to be explained the Orthodox cannot tell us. Why, if the church be, as he asserts, God's sole appointed means of salvation, there should be so many generous and gracious spirits outside its boundaries remains a mystery. Here would seem to be a task for Professor Bulgakoff and his colleagues of the Russian Seminary in Paris, and it is a task in which they may find help from the writings of their Protestant fellow-Christians.

In the type of their piety, too, there are lessons which the Orthodox might learn from Protestants. We have seen that Orthodox piety has been prevailingly mystical in character. The sense of social responsibility in the form in which it has been central in Protestant piety has been given a subordinate place. Let the church be free to hold its services as it wished and develop its communities of the contemplative life, and it could be content to leave to the state the sphere of economics and of politics. The

history of the Russian Church during the past generation is a striking illustration of the disastrous effect of such a division of territory.

Thoughtful leaders among the Orthodox realize that continued separation of individual piety and social service will be fatal to the church of the future. So they are studying the ethical implications of Orthodoxy, not only in the Creed but in the liturgy. They are co-operating with Protestants in such practical tasks as those of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work at Geneva. They realize that if the church is to recover its place in the life of the Russian people, it must be a purified church, concerned not for a part of life but for the whole, for body as well as for soul, for the family and the state as well as for the individual. Here the experience of Protestants in practical co-operation in social service may offer a suggestive model.

Once more the Orthodox may learn from the Protestant the limitations which separation imposes upon bodies which have no officially recognized organ of common action. In theory Orthodoxy is a single church organized for convenience in a group of independent and self-governing churches. In practice these churches have no machinery through which they can function together. One of the surprising by-products of the ecumenical meetings of Stockholm and of Lausanne was the revelation of the fact that Orthodoxy possessed no official agency for common action. Men met at Stockholm, who, though

important officials of Orthodox churches, had never met face to face in any Orthodox gathering.

There are historical reasons which explain this separation—reasons in part political, in part ecclesiastical. But their results have been none the less disastrous. For they have deprived the Orthodox churches of their power of common action and left them all but helpless against the aggressive attacks of a militant atheism.

Contact with Protestantism has already proved of service to the Orthodox churches. It has not only made them more conscious of their corporate as well as of their individual responsibility. It has furnished needed points of contact which are full of promise for the future.

In the spring of 1933 a Conference was held at Bucharest in Rumania under the joint auspices of the World Alliance and of the Universal Christian Council. At this Conference representatives of the Orthodox churches of Rumania, Bulgaria, Jugoslavia and Greece met to discuss their common problems, and in particular to consider what was their responsibility as churches with reference to their fellow-Christians of different religion and nationality who as a result of the political and economic provisions of the Treaty of Versailles found themselves minority groups in an alien state.

The results of the discussion were summed up in the following paragraph which was unanimously adopted. "The Conference expresses the determination of the committees it represents to work with all

the resources they can command to secure a Christian solution of all the questions which are raised by the existence in the Balkans of minorities, national or religious.”<sup>1</sup> Subsequent events such as the friendly visit of the Jugo-Slav bishops to Bulgaria in 1933 for further discussion of the minorities question give reason for hope that this resolution was more than an empty phrase.

Encouraging as are such occasional contacts, they will not of themselves accomplish what needs to be done. What is needed is some permanent organization, officially sponsored and recognized, through which the Orthodox churches may meet statedly for consideration of their common problems and through which, when needed, they can act together. In any plans for the creation of such a central organization the experience of Protestants in their federations of churches may prove suggestive.

Signs are not wanting that the authorities of the Orthodox Church recognize the need for such closer organization and would welcome any practical step to bring it about. Nor is their interest in more effective organization confined to Orthodoxy. When plans were being made for the Stockholm meeting, the Patriarch Basilios wrote an open letter in which he expressed the judgment that the time had come when the non-Roman churches should meet statedly to deal with practical matters of common concern to Christendom. When asked whether this view was still

<sup>1</sup> *Rapport de la Conférence Régionale Balkanique Sociale et Internationale tenue à Bucarest du 14 au 19 mai 1933* (Geneva, 1933), p. 23.

held in the Orthodox Church, the present Patriarch answered in the affirmative. "That view," he said, "was not simply the private opinion of the Patriarch Basilus. It is the belief of the Orthodox Church."<sup>2</sup>

Can we go farther? Can we contemplate the possibility of a Council that shall embrace all the churches, including that of Rome? That was the hope of those who were responsible for calling the Conference on Faith and Order, and it is still the hope of the Anglo-Catholics. A reunion which should leave Rome out does not seem to them a reunion worth having.

This explains their unwillingness to take any steps that look toward co-operation with Protestants. It not only explains their lack of interest in the Patriarch's proposal for a Council of non-Roman churches, but also their unwillingness to take any practical steps to give effect to the resolution adopted by the Lambeth Conference in 1920 that the time had come when, pending the consummation of organic unity in the full sense, it would be desirable to organize in different geographical areas councils of Christians for the purpose of practical co-operation.<sup>3</sup> Such an act they fear will make closer relations with Rome more difficult. They are therefore unwilling to take part in it.

Wherever one tries to take action looking toward

<sup>2</sup> In a private conversation with the author.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion Holden at Lambeth Palace, July 5 to August 7, 1920: Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with Resolutions and Reports* (New York, 1920): "The Conference recommends that, wherever it has not already



unity the shadow of Rome falls across the picture. We can make no progress in the development of our program till we are clear on this point.

### 3. THE PLACE OF ROME IN THE MOVEMENT FOR REUNION

What then is to be the place of Rome in the movement for reunion? In what sense and to what degree ought those non-Roman Christians who have this matter at heart to take Rome into their account.

The position of Rome on the matter of reunion is perfectly clear. It has been stated again and again without equivocation. Rome knows one road which leads to reunion, and only one—that which involves the submission of all non-Roman Christians to the authority of the Church of Rome. When plans for the Lausanne Conference were first under consideration, a delegation of American Episcopal bishops, including the Anglo-Catholic Bishop of Fond-du-Lac, went to Rome to extend a formal invitation to the Pope to be officially represented. The Holy Father received them courteously, but explained that from the point of view of the church he

been done, Councils representing all Christian Communions should be formed within such areas as may be deemed most convenient, as centres of united effort to promote the physical, moral, and social welfare of the people, and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of human life." (Resolution 13, p. 31.)

"We ought to add that we are thinking not only or chiefly of Central Committees, of conspicuous religious leaders in great capital cities, but local councils gathering in each centre of population the representatives of all the Christian congregations of the locality. Already considerable progress has been made in many towns of the British Empire and the U. S. A." (p. 76.)

represented there was only one way to accomplish their end, namely, that the visitors, with the churches they represented, should submit to the one whom God had appointed the rightful head of the church, the person to whom they were then speaking.

No student of church history during the years that have elapsed since 1870 can doubt that this answer represents the deep-seated conviction of contemporary Roman Catholics of every school of thought. They may differ in their view of the form the answer should take and of the language in which it should be expressed. But of its substance there can be no doubt. From their point of view there can be no difference in principle between those who refuse to make their submission. Anglo-Catholics as well as Presbyterians and Baptists are in the eyes of Rome Protestants, and as such living in schism. Baptists and Presbyterians as well as Anglo-Catholics are to be sure members of the Roman Church, since they have been baptized into that church by the use of the Trinitarian form and with intention. But all alike are from the point of view of Rome heretical, and as such excluded from the benefits of their membership till they make the appropriate act of submission.

This being the case, it would seem to be a mistake of judgment for the Anglo-Catholic to allow the attitude of Rome to exert a determining influence upon his attitude toward other Christians. As a Catholic in the type of his religious experience, it is right that he should take every care to safeguard the purity of his witness. But that witness, as his presence in

the Church of England abundantly proves, can be borne in a church which is inheritor of the Protestant as well as of the Catholic tradition. The Anglo-Catholic therefore should welcome rather than shun every opportunity of contact with his Protestant fellow-Christians, all the more if he feels that at some points, and these serious ones, their type of Christianity is defective.

When we say that in their work for reunion non-Roman Christians would be wise to ignore the Church of Rome, we have in mind of course the church in its capacity as a legal institution. When we think of the church as a spiritual fellowship, mother and home of the saints, the very opposite is true. Here, as we have seen, there are many points of contact which remind Protestants as well as Anglo-Catholics of the extent to which they are spiritually one with their Roman Catholic fellow-Christians. It has been a major purpose of this book to show how many and how rich these contacts are and so to promote that mutual understanding and fellowship out of which, if at all, more formal relationship may some day grow.

Nor are Protestants alone in their recognition. In the Roman Church too there are individuals and groups whose attitude toward reunion is of this kind. While they believe, as they must, that it is the purpose of God that in the end all true Christians shall find their home in the church that owns the primacy of Peter, they believe that the way to promote that end is by personal contact and witness. They welcome therefore such conversations as were recently

held at Malines. They hope that the way may be found, if not in official conferences like those of Stockholm and Lausanne yet in other gatherings officially sanctioned, for members of their church to have fellowship with Protestants. Above all in their prayer life they make room for Protestants as brothers for whom Christ died and whom they must love as he loved.

#### 4. WHERE PROTESTANTS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS CAN WORK TOGETHER

When we pass from the more technical field of ecclesiastical relations to the wider field of intellectual and moral life, we find that there are many points at which Protestants and Roman Catholics can work together. In action, if not in theory, the possibilities of co-operation are both more numerous and more fruitful than many Protestants realize.

One field of possible co-operation is that of scholarship. Some years ago the writer had the privilege of spending an hour in the study of Monsignor Batiffol, the distinguished historian of the Roman liturgy. In looking over the books that made up his working library the visitor was interested to see that more than half of them were by Protestants. In the field of theological scholarship Roman Catholic scholars recognize no denominational barriers. They are as ready to make use of the researches of a Presbyterian or a Lutheran as of one of their own communion.

It is true that his church imposes upon the Cath-

olic scholar certain restrictions which do not limit his Protestant fellow-student. When he comes to a point on which his church has made an official pronouncement he is no longer free to question. Moreover, even in the field where no dogmatic pronouncement has yet been made there is a disciplinary authority of the church which he is bound to respect, and he can never be sure but some work, written in utmost sincerity and good faith, may find itself upon the Index. None the less even in the field of theological scholarship the opportunity of friendly collaboration between Catholics and Protestants is wider than many Protestants realize.

When we pass from theological scholarship in the technical sense to the broad field of human knowledge, we find even closer collaboration. In most of the important fields of research—in the physical sciences, in psychology, in sociology, in law, in medicine—Catholics and Protestants are working side by side and there is no field of human interest in which either can claim the monopoly.

Social service is another fruitful field of common action. Faced with the great fact of human need, Catholics and Protestants forget their differences and are found working side by side. In the Committee of Fourteen, an organization founded by the late W. H. Baldwin to wage war upon commercialized vice, American Catholics and Protestants worked together for years, and this is typical of a co-operation which has taken place in many similar fields.

More significant, because involving questions of

theory as well as of practice, is the contact between Catholics and Protestants in the field of economic and social reform. Such co-operation, while not unknown in other countries, has been carried farthest in America. Here the Research Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council has co-operated with the Research Department of the Federal Council in more than one important research project, such as the study of the strike in Western Maryland or of the Centralia riots.<sup>5</sup>

A striking illustration of such co-operation was the action taken in the case of the twelve-hour day in the steel industry. On this subject public opinion in the United States had grown so sensitive that in 1922 President Harding sent for Mr. Gary, of the United States Steel Corporation, as President of the Iron and Steel Institute, and urged him to put a stop to the practice. Mr. Gary responded by appointing a committee to look into the matter. The committee deliberated for a year and when the attention of the public—proverbially short of memory—had been diverted to other things, reported that the change to an eight-hour day was neither in the best interests of the men nor practicable for the industry. Within two weeks the Federal Council of Churches, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Central

<sup>5</sup> *The Enginemen's Strike on the Western Maryland Railroad.* A report prepared and issued by The Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, The Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1927.

For the Centralia reference cf. Note (7) of Chap. XI, p. 287.

Conference of American Rabbis through their appropriate departments had prepared and issued to the press a brief and temperate statement<sup>6</sup> denouncing the policy of the industry as "morally indefensible." This was followed a week later by a research report on the factual aspects of the matter, issued by the Federal Council. The following week a letter was made public from the President of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company setting forth the successful experience of his company in introducing the eight-hour shift. The press gave wide publicity to these statements. Within six weeks Mr. Gary reconvened the Iron and Steel Institute, and its action continuing the twelve-hour day was formally rescinded as a concession to public opinion. What the President alone had been unable to effect, the joint action of the churches brought to pass.

Nor is it only in such purely secular fields that co-operation is taking place. Even in the field of religious education it has been found practicable. In many of the great universities of Europe, Catholic and Protestant faculties are working side by side, and even in the state universities of the United States, where secular standards are the rule, it has been found possible to establish schools of religion in which Catholic and Protestant teachers work together on the same faculty. So the Religious Edu-

<sup>6</sup> The initial statement was issued by the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council, the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

cation Association, a body formed in 1903 by the late William Rainey Harper for the purpose of promoting moral and religious education,<sup>7</sup> includes in its membership Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

Specially significant as a sign of the times is a Committee which has been recently formed in the United States, under the presidency of Newton Baker, for the cultivation of better understanding between Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. Through the meetings of this Committee, much has been done to remove misunderstanding and prejudice and to introduce Catholics and Protestants to one another. It has been the privilege of the present writer to participate in more than one meeting held under the auspices of this Committee in which he has joined with Roman Catholics in presenting the claims of religion to audiences of American college students.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This purpose was defined in an early statement in the following terms:

- "1. To inspire the educational forces with the religious ideal;
- 2. To inspire the religious forces with the educational ideal;
- 3. To keep before the public mind the ideal of religious education and the sense of its need and value."

<sup>8</sup> On February 25, 1935, a meeting was held in Washington which is believed to have been unparalleled in the history of the Nation's Capital. At this meeting pastors of twenty different communions—Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—met to form a Committee, the purpose of which was to stress the importance, in a democracy, of religion and church attendance. A letter from the President of the United States was read, in which he said: "It seems to me highly significant that the ministers of religion in Washington—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—have with such unanimity agreed to co-operate in promoting a movement whose purpose is to encourage religion and church attendance, without any compromising of their own convictions or interfering with their own methods of work and worship."



Rarer, and yet not wholly without precedent, are cases of co-operation in worship. On this point Rome is exceptionally sensitive: Yet here, too, occasions arise when the responsible authorities recognize that even this barrier is not insuperable. A notable example is a recent encyclical of the present Pope, in which he urged all men of good will to unite in a holy crusade of love and help to alleviate the terrible consequences of the economic crisis.<sup>9</sup> Here we have for the first time an official recognition of the fellowship of prayer which in silent, but none the less effective, ways has long been uniting Catholics and Protestants.

## 5. WHAT PROTESTANTS MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE REUNITED CHURCH

There are thus many ways in which Protestants and Catholics can work together and, by sharing of a common experience, help to deepen and enrich their religious life.

<sup>9</sup> "In the name of the Lord, therefore . . . let peace be implored for all men . . . and it is prayer that will bring the gift of peace . . . prayer that is addressed to the Heavenly Father who is the Father of all men; prayer that is the common expression of family feelings, of that great family which extends beyond the bounds of any country and continent. Men who in every nation pray to the same God for peace on earth cannot be at the same time bearers of discord among peoples; men who turn in prayer to the Divine Majesty cannot foment that nationalistic imperialism whereby single peoples make their own states a god; men who look to the 'God of Peace and of Love' . . . will know no rest until finally that peace which the world cannot give comes down from the Giver of every good gift." Cf. Encyclical *Caritate Christi Compulsi*. May 3, 1932.

But the contacts of which we have spoken affect only individuals or groups of individuals. Is there nothing more that Protestants can do? We have seen that they represent an essential element in any total and full-orbed Christianity; that they hold treasures in trust for the church of the future which they dare not surrender. Is there nothing that they can do to make these treasures more widely available; nothing that will interpret more fully to their Catholic fellow-Christians the genius of Protestant piety?

There are at least four things that they can do—four things that they must do if they are to make their full contribution to the reunited church.

First of all, they must realize that their own type of piety, however legitimate, even essential, it may be, is partial; that there is room in the Church of Christ for worship of a different kind; that the other-worldly type of piety that meets us in Orthodoxy answers to something deep in human nature for which place must always be found in the church; that the authoritarian religion of Rome, too, meets a need which is as old as man and which is likely to last as long as man survives. Protestant piety, we have seen, is democratic piety. It makes its primary appeal to the individual conscience. But one's conscience may lead him to Orthodoxy or to Rome as well as to Lambeth or to Geneva. The true democrat must be catholic enough to realize this and to make place in his sympathies for every sincere lover and disciple of Jesus Christ.

Again Protestants must make place in their sys-

tem of religious education for a sympathetic appreciation of Catholic piety. The history of the Catholic Church should no longer be studied as a chapter in a story that ended at the Reformation. One must realize that Catholicism is the religion of multitudes of our fellow-Christians and that it is the inspiration of many of the finest intellects and of the most unselfish spirits of our day. It is only against the background of such sympathetic and appreciative study that the distinctive contribution of Protestantism can be understood and its responsibility to the church of the future be put in its proper setting.

In the third place Protestants must believe enough in the mission of the church to make the sacrifices of personal liking and prestige which are necessary to make that mission effective. We have seen that Protestants have recognized the duty of unity to the extent of creating a complicated federal machinery, local, national, and international; but they have not recognized it enough to give the agents whom they have appointed to act for them the authority to make that action effective. In all important matters each denomination retains the full control in its own hands and entrusts to the federation only less important matters. When it comes to such a central matter as overchurching, there is no authority which can exercise effective control, and even in the missionary work of the church abroad as at home rivalry instead of co-operation is still too often the rule. All this leaves on the thoughtful Catholic the impression of insincerity and half-heartedness. If Protestants

really believed what they say they do, it seems to him they would find some way to get together.

Finally and above all, if Protestants wish to convince Catholics that their type of piety has an essential place in the church of the future they must put a stronger emphasis on the life of prayer.

Recently I was speaking with a thoughtful woman brought up as a Protestant who had joined the Roman Catholic Church. "What was the reason for your change?" I asked her. "It was because," she answered, "among all the Protestants I knew I could scarcely find one who took his religion seriously. I was in deep trouble of soul and I needed help. And that help came to me through the Catholic Church because in that church I found people who really believed that God is the most important fact in the world and that he can be a very present help in time of trouble."

It would not be fair to take this experience as typical of Protestantism as a whole. But there is truth enough in it to afford food for sober thought. There are too many Protestants who have an interest in religion indeed, but to whom it is only one interest among many; something for a part of life and not the most important at that. There are too few to whom it is the one thing needful—the pearl of great price. If we ask why many thoughtful Anglo-Catholics are opposed to indiscriminate intercommunion, one reason is that it does not seem to them that the Protestants they know come to the communion with the vivid sense that it is there they are to meet

the living Christ. They miss from their religion that sense of awe, of wonder, of holy joy which to them is the essence of religion. They fear that the admission of such half-hearted Christians to the church will lower the standard which they feel themselves called of God to maintain.

There is only one way to resolve this doubt, and that is through a revival of personal religion. Let Protestants show by their life and conversation that the great conviction to which their type of Christianity owes its origin can be verified in life, the conviction that a church which can produce saints can be developed in an atmosphere of freedom, and they will have removed the greatest single present obstacle to the reunion of the church.

*PART IV (CONTINUED)*

*THE CHURCH CATHOLIC AND  
PROTESTANT*

CHAPTER XV

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE DIFFERENCES THAT  
REMAIN

1. God's Part and Man's in the Making of the Church.
2. What the Church of Yesterday Can Teach Us about the Church of Tomorrow.
3. Things Immediately Practicable.
4. The Ultimate Dynamic.
5. Conclusion.

*Since it is common Christian faith that the unity of the church must in the last analysis be the work of God rather than of man, it is important to discover what history can tell us as to God's method with his church in the past. Here we learn that this method has not been uniform. Not only have different types of thought and experience emerged in the course of Christian history, but the form of the church's organization has varied correspondingly. It would seem, therefore, that any organization which is to be comprehensive enough to include all the existing types of Christian faith and experience must be federal in nature, since federation is the only form of organization which is able to achieve both unity and difference without doing violence to either.*

*Whatever view may be taken as to the ultimate form of the reunited church, there are several steps in the direction of unity which are immediately practicable, such as (1) the establishment of a Council of the non-Roman Churches to meet statedly for the consideration of the common interests of all Christians; (2) the reunion of the different branches of Christians who belong either to related families or to definite geographical areas; (3) the provision for systematic instruction in each branch of the church concerning the faith and experience of the others; and (4) the revival of the spirit of common worship through which alone is to be found the ultimate dynamic by which the desired unity shall finally be achieved.*

## 1. GOD'S PART AND MAN'S IN THE MAKING OF THE CHURCH

Thus far we have been thinking of the unity of the church primarily in its bearing on the responsibility of men. What can we, who are disciples of Christ, and who believe that it is his will that we should live together in unity, do to make the church for which he gave himself what in the mind of God it was meant to be? But there is another factor to be taken into account, more august and determinative, and that is God, whose purpose it is—so both Catholics and Protestants believe—that there should be a church to witness to his Gospel. What matters in the last analysis is not what we do but what God wills. He it is to whom alone belong the power and the majesty. As it was his summons that called the first disciples, and his Spirit that endowed them with the needed graces for their divinely appointed mission, so it is he who must finally bring to pass the unity of his church in the form which shall be well pleasing to him.

This is common Christian conviction. Protestants and Catholics differ, as we have seen, in their view of the nature of the church that God wills; more particularly as to the extent to which he has endowed it with a definite legal constitution. But they are at one in believing that it is God who through



Christ has founded the church, and that our duty to love, cherish, and foster it depends finally upon the fact that it is the divinely appointed channel of his grace. Whether, with the Roman Catholics, they believe that Christ has given a definite responsibility to Peter and his successors to govern the church in his name; or, like the Congregationalists, are convinced that his purpose for his church is best realized through the free association of groups of like-minded believers, they agree that without the presence of his Spirit, informing and transforming, the church is simply a human institution, one among many, without justification for its claim to a primary place in the loyalty of its members.

Why then, it may be asked, should we take our human responsibility so seriously? Why not wait until God in his own good time shows the way?

Catholics and Protestants agree in their answer. It is because God's will is realized through men. As in the life of the individual there must be inner assent to the divine call, before the transformed life becomes possible, so God's purpose for his church cannot be realized without the assent of the intellect and the submission of the will of those who are its members.

We touch here on the greatest of all mysteries—the relation of the divine will to the human. Wherever we turn it meets us, in the individual life, in the person of our Lord, in the life of his church. How can God be sovereign and man free? How can Christ be very God yet very man? How can the church be

human institution and divine creation? Through all the ages the philosophers have wrestled with this problem. Again and again the theologians have attempted by their definitions to find some final solution. Still it eludes the human intellect. Still man wrestles for a solution in vain.

But of the fact there can be no doubt. However we may explain it God is sovereign and man free. God's purpose for his church, as for the individual Christian, fulfils itself not apart from the human personality but through it.

This explains the imperfection of the church. It is imperfect as everything that is human is imperfect. As the divine message comes to fallible and finite men, so it is transmitted through fallible and finite men. This too is common Christian doctrine. Even in Roman theory it is true that the church holds her divinely intrusted treasures of truth and grace in earthen vessels. Only a few—and these the greatest of the saints—have attained sinlessness. Only on rare occasions, and when surrounded by the most elaborate safeguards, is the Pope infallible. Otherwise, he, like the rest of us, is a fallible and sinful man who must fit himself for his high office by the self-discipline of prayer.

This contrast between the divine claim of the church and the imperfection of the human instruments through whom it functions is a great trial to faith. For to faith it seems as though God could do nothing which is not perfect. If then we find imperfection at any point in the church that professes to

speak for God, it would seem to disprove its divine character.

But perfection, we must remember, is always relative to the purpose for which the work was intended. The perfection of a statue is one thing; that of a human being is another. The perfection of a statue is realized once for all. It consists in a symmetry of outline and contour which never changes. What the face of the Venus of Milo was to the Greeks who first beheld it, that it still is to the latest visitor to the Louvre today. What change may take place is not in the sculptor's work but in the varying appreciation which we who are observers bring with us to its contemplation.

It is very different with a human being. Here change is of the essence of man's perfection. For man, like everything else that is alive, was meant to grow. "When I was a child," says the Apostle, "I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."<sup>1</sup> It belongs to the perfect life always to be turning its back on the past. "Forgetting those things which are behind," says the same Apostle, "I press on."<sup>2</sup>

In the older theology, Catholic and Protestant alike, the perfection of the church was conceived after the fashion of a statue rather than of a person. When God founded the church, so the Catholics taught, he gave it the perfect pattern from which it was never to depart. When his Spirit called men back from the errant church to the errorless Bible,

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. 13:11.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 3:13-14.

so the Protestants argued, it was because at the beginning, and there alone, perfection is to be found. Such is still the prevailing conception in the Orthodox Church, and a similar conception meets us in Protestantism in fundamentalist circles.

There is another conception of perfection which points to a different view of the church. According to this view the life of the church is like the life of a tree. It began very modestly in Jesus' call of a few simple fishermen. It expanded as they moved into a new environment and assumed fresh responsibilities. Throughout its entire history it has been developing new systems of thought and more elaborate forms of organization. No past achievement therefore can measure its present duty. For God, who has been the teacher of the church through all the generations, is still its teacher today.

Where this view of perfection is controlling, change is normal, since God, the Creative Spirit, is still at work. It was a sound instinct therefore which led the Catholic Church to make place for tradition side by side with the Bible. It was the same sound instinct that led to the institution of the papacy through which God's new word to each generation could find prompt and definite utterance. It was the same conception of a continuing revelation which found expression in the word of that stout old Puritan, John Robinson, that there was new light still to break forth from the word of God.

There is something more that needs to be added before our view of God's way with his church is

complete. If the perfection of a plant differs from that of a statue, the perfection of a man differs even more from that of a plant. For man is moral personality, and his task is the making of character. To make a character more is needed than light, air, and food. Moral choice is necessary, with its resulting possibility of error and failure. So with man sin enters into the world and since the church is human as well as divine, finds its way into the church. The church—so Catholic and Protestant agree—is *corpus permixtum*, a society which includes the evil and the good.

It is not strange if face to face with the spectacle of human folly and error which meets us when we retrace the history of the church, theologians should have tried to find some point in this ever-changing history where they could say, here God's work for his church is complete. When you affirm this, you have the whole. When you hold fast to this, you can make no mistake. Orthodox and Anglo-Catholics find this fixed point in the decrees of the seven generally acknowledged councils. Roman Catholics find it in the Vatican definition of infallibility. Protestants insist on going back to the Bible, fundamentalists farther still to the inerrant autographs. Everywhere the motive is the same: to find some fixed point where you can stop; to have your authority handed to you ready-made in packages divinely certified.

Hard as it may be for us to accept it, that is not the way that God has taken with his church. Still his word to us modern Christians is the word of

the Apostle to the disciples of the first century. "Forgetting the things that are behind," let us "press on."<sup>8</sup> The church of the second century was different from that of the first; the church of the tenth from that of the second; the church of the sixteenth from that of the tenth. Why should we expect that what we see now should mark the limit of the church of the future?

If we are to work intelligently for the unity of the church our faces must be turned forward not back. We must face the fact that while God's purpose for his church remains unchanged, the conditions under which its mission must be performed are constantly varying and so the form of its organization must vary accordingly.

## 2. WHAT THE CHURCH OF YESTERDAY CAN TEACH US ABOUT THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

What can a study of the church of the past teach us about the form which is likely to be assumed by the church of the future?

First, that it will not be the same as that which has been assumed by the church of the past. What it may be like in detail it may not be possible for us to say; but that it will vary at some points we may be certain. For to deny this would be to be blind to the teaching of history which shows us that there is not a single branch of the church, including the Orthodox—still more the Roman—whose organiza-

<sup>8</sup> Phil. 3:13-14.

tion is not different today at material points from that with which it began.

Secondly, that any church which is to include all that by common consent is recognized as genuinely Christian must make place in its organization both for the Catholic and for the Protestant types of religious experience. If there is any fact which seems established by the history of the past four hundred years it is that Protestantism is not a passing phase in Christian experience, but represents a type of piety for which a place must be made within the church universal.

Again, we may learn from the history of the church that the achievement of outward unity brings with it no necessary guarantee of spiritual union. Rome has learned this lesson, and through its provision for the Orders—societies of like-minded men each under its own rule—it has made place within its larger unity for types which, if held to closer uniformity, it might have proved impossible to combine. Even today the Protestant who studies contemporary Roman Catholicism is repeatedly surprised—not to say shocked—by the lack of sympathy—often the active antipathy—which exists between members of the different Orders. But he needs only to look at home to see the same phenomenon repeating itself in Protestantism. Fundamentalists and Modernists among the Presbyterians, Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals among the Anglicans often act and feel toward one another in ways difficult to reconcile with membership in the same church.

Nor is the need of flexibility of organization due simply to the presence of different types of religious experience and conviction. It is necessary as a protection against a perennial danger of all forms of organization—the danger of confusing means with ends. It belongs to the very nature of social organization that it tends to become self-perpetuating. Offices originally created to serve some definite but transient purpose tend to persist after the need to which they owed their origin has passed away. This phenomenon, familiar in political life, is repeated in the history of the church, both Catholic and Protestant.

It would seem then that in any plan for the future organization of the church, large room must be left for new adjustment. And this, not only in order to give scope for the free development of tendencies which are implicit in the life of the larger and more conservative bodies, but in order to make place for those varying groups, like the Baptists and the Friends, who cannot easily be fitted into any mold acceptable to the majority of their fellow-Christians.

For all these reasons it would seem to follow that any organization which is to be inclusive enough to make place for all the varieties of faith and experience which Catholics and Protestants alike recognize as genuinely Christian must be federal in nature. For a federal unity alone makes it possible in adequate measure to combine unity with variety.

Quite apart from this theoretical reason there are practical reasons which favor a federal organiza-



tion. It is congenial to the habits both of Orthodox and of Protestants. Orthodoxy, as we have seen, finds nothing inconsistent with the unity of the church in the existence side by side of independent and autonomous churches. But federation is the only way in which the unity of autonomous churches can find administrative expression. Protestantism in its different federations, national and international, has already taken the first step toward creating such an administrative unity. Why then may not the two be included in a larger federation which in time may embrace all the non-Roman churches?

There are no doubt serious difficulties in the way of such a proposal. But this is of itself no argument against it; for there is no conceivable plan of union which does not face serious difficulties. Are the arguments against federal unity so formidable as to be conclusive?

The first thing that will be said—and to many Catholic-minded Christians it seems the conclusive thing—is that federal union is not union in any properly accepted sense of the word. It is at best a first step toward what might ultimately become a true organic union; at worst a substitute which, because it promises certain immediate goods, may easily lead men to stop short of the larger and only completely satisfying goal.

If we take such federations as we see today as our model there is much to be said in support of this view. Such a body, for example, as the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is in

no sense a united church. It is at most, like its political counterpart the League of Nations, a league of autonomous churches which have agreed to meet statedly for conference but without surrendering any part of their original sovereignty. Under such conditions common action can be taken only on matters that are relatively unimportant, and even common witness is in danger of repudiation by some one or more of the constituent units. How different this from the type of unity which the Catholic visualizes as necessary to carry conviction to a skeptical world!

It must be admitted that if the present forms of federal unity are the only possible forms, they will not give us what we need. But it by no means follows that they are the only possible forms. There is nothing necessarily inconsistent between federal unity and organic union. What is necessary to organic union is that there should be a central government sovereign within its own sphere. This is quite compatible with the existence of intermediate units with reserved powers, free to act within the limits assigned without interference from the central government. The United States is an example of such a federal unity which is in the true sense organic, and there is no reason why the ultimate unity of the Christian Church might not take a similar form.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> On the meaning of the term "organic union" cf. *Christian Unity: Its Principles and Possibilities* (New York, 1921), pp. 198-204:

"Two things enter into the definition of organic union: first, the nature of the union proposed; second, the state of mind which accompanies it. Organic union is, in the first place, the corporate union of two (or more) independent and sovereign corporations in such a form that within limits agreed upon there is now but one

Before such a united church can come to pass, there must be a change in the spiritual attitude of those who compose its several units. They must come to feel, as not all Christians feel today, that the things that unite them are so much more important than the things that divide them that they are willing to make the partial surrender of sovereignty that organic union requires. That surrender may go farther in some cases than in others. It may be found that in some of the existing communions the extent of agreement is so great that the sacrifice of individual rights which is needed to consummate organic union will be easily possible of accomplishment. There may be others where the differences of conviction are so great that it is only in a limited area, and in connection with specific matters, that delegation of power will be possible. What is essential is that there should be an area in which all the participating units not only feel but act as one; that within that area they should no longer think of themselves as possessing independent sovereignty, but as constituent members of a larger whole to which their major allegiance is due.

When we try to picture such a federal union more in detail, there are two possibilities which suggest themselves. We may think of it as a union of national churches after the analogy of the Orthodox churches today or we may think of it as a union of parallel

body where formerly there were two (or more). It is, in the second place, the acceptance of this action as final. Organic union takes place when the centre of allegiance is transferred from the older bodies to the new, so that in case of a conflict between the two conscience requires that one follow the latter rather than the former." (P. 198.)

denominations such as exists in contemporary Protestantism.

It is possible that neither method alone will prove adequate to provide for the complexity of the existing situation, but that it may prove necessary to combine both. For such a procedure we may find an analogy in the present organization of the Roman Church. Rome is an example of organic union in which both forms of federation are admitted as subordinate principles—the geographical form, as illustrated in the diocesan system culminating in subordinate but none the less relatively independent national units, the functional form, as illustrated by the Orders. These, like the denominations in Protestantism, are parallel self-governing units, which, cutting across the diocesan organization find their sole principle of unity in their common acceptance of the authority of the Pope. If unity is ever to be realized as between the different non-Roman bodies, it will probably be upon some such plan as this.

When we ask what is the likelihood that any such unity can be achieved, we are confronted with a number of incalculable factors. This only we can say with certainty, that, if it is to come, it will be step by step and subject to the qualifications already mentioned. There is today a wide area in which organic union of the type I have described is already in the realm of possibility. In the mission field the creation of national churches is proceeding apace. South India is but the most conspicuous of a number of different contemporary examples. In the United

States, Doctor Douglass, the most recent, and the most careful student of the subject,<sup>5</sup> believes that far the largest part of American Protestantism is already ready for such a union. Even the matter of Episcopacy—the rock on which so many promising attempts at union have suffered shipwreck—need present no insuperable obstacle if the validity of the non-Episcopal ministries be granted and the repudiation of fellowship with non-Episcopal churches be not required.

In Britain and on the Continent, things are likely to move more slowly, but here also progress is being made. Anglicans, Orthodox, and old Catholics are already taking steps which may well lead to the creation of a federation of churches of the Catholic tradition, and with this a point of contact would be provided with the Protestant federations of Britain, of the Continent, and of America.

There are however two limits to what one may hope to accomplish by such a federal union even if all the other obstacles could be overcome. One is the existence of the Roman Church, with its claim to unqualified sovereignty; the other the attitude of the extreme independent groups who might regard even the moderate limitation of sovereignty which would be involved in entering such a federation as the surrender of their essential principle. It is not easy to see how they can be included in any plan which is at present practicable.

<sup>5</sup> Douglass, H. Paul, *Church Unity Movements in the United States* (New York, 1934).

It is not easy, that is to say, to see how they can be *formally* included. This does not mean that ways of practical co-operation cannot be found. On the contrary, the creation of such a powerful federated church, embracing the great majority of non-Roman Christians, would greatly facilitate common action between that body and such other Christians as for the time should elect to remain outside. We have seen how even the presence of such comparatively weak bodies as the Federal Council of Churches has made possible common action between American Roman Catholics and Protestants. How much more likely would such co-operation become with so powerful a unit as the new church would present! With the independents, on the other hand, the same kind of relationship could continue which now exists. They would still remain members of such general bodies as are represented by the Conferences on Faith and Order and on Life and Work, or their successors, as well as of the national units of which they are composed, and through association with their fellow Christians in such bodies their fears of closer union might in time be overcome and they too become members of the central body.

If this result is to be reached two things must happen. Those who belong to the larger church must respect the conscience of their more sensitive brethren, and instead of trying to force them into a legal conformity which they repudiate and fear, must be willing to rely on the authority which is inherent in the type of witness for which the united church would

stand. Conversely, those who belong to the more loosely organized bodies must come to see the help which order brings to their fellow Christians of the older tradition, and be ready to accept some limitation of their freedom of action for the common good.

### 3. THINGS IMMEDIATELY PRACTICABLE

In the meantime there are some things which are immediately practicable.

It is possible (1) to organize a Council of the non-Roman churches of the type recommended by the ecumenical Patriarch; (2) to carry further the merger of churches belonging to the same or related denominational families; (3) to provide in colleges and theological schools of the different churches for systematic instruction in the beliefs, practices, and types of religious experience of the other Christian bodies; (4) to take more seriously our meetings for common worship, both those which it is now possible to hold under official auspices and those informal gatherings which require no official sanction.

The first step to take in our further progress toward unity would be to provide for the regular meeting of representatives of those churches whose constitution makes such meeting possible. This could be accomplished by the organization of such a Council as is contemplated in the proposal of the Patriarch Basilius to which reference has already been made. Such a Council would meet a double need. It would furnish a forum for the discussion of vital questions which are of interest to the constituent churches;

it would make possible common action where action seemed needed and practicable.

There can be no theoretical objection to the organization of such a Council, to which indeed both the Orthodox and the Anglicans are already committed in principle. All that is needed is some practicable plan which will meet the emotional difficulties which have hitherto inhibited action.

Two possible organizing centres suggest themselves for such a Council: that which is associated with the name of Stockholm and that which is associated with the name of Lausanne. Until recently, as we have seen, these two movements have held aloof from each other, Stockholm restricting itself to the field of life and work, Lausanne to that of faith and order. Recently however the two movements have been drawing together, not indeed by any official action, but by the inherent attraction of the common life of which both alike are outgrowth and expression. As those who are interested in Lausanne have come to realize that the organic unity after which they aspire is valueless save as it expresses an inner spiritual life, so those who are responsible for Stockholm have come increasingly to see that unity of life must be based on community of conviction if it is to be permanently effective.

There would seem to be no reason therefore why the two movements, while retaining each its autonomy within its appropriate sphere, should not be included in some larger unit such as that contemplated by the ecumenical Patriarch.

What but good could result, if at stated periods



—say once in five or ten years—the non-Roman churches, or so many of them as it should be found practicable to include, should meet for conference on matters that concern the Christian cause in the world? So far as differences of principle still remained which prevented closer union, they could be dealt with by committees operating in the field of Faith and Order; so far as an area appeared, in which, consistently with existing convictions and law, common action seemed practicable it could be dealt with by agencies operating in the field of Life and Work. Bodies that found one form of co-operation for the moment impossible might still take part in the other, as today there are churches which participate in some of the activities of the Federal Council without being full constituent members.

Just where the line would have to be drawn both as to membership and as to activity only experiment could determine. But the greater the uncertainty, the more necessary to make a beginning within the lines where as a matter of fact agreement exists.

A second thing which is immediately practicable is the merger of churches belonging to the same or related denominational families. Such a process is already under way with apparently increasing momentum. The union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church in the present Church of Scotland; the union of the three bodies of British Methodists in the United Methodist Conference; the union of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists in the United Church of Canada; the union of three general bodies of American Lutherans in

the United Lutheran Church in America are but the most conspicuous examples of a movement which is rapidly reducing the number of independent Protestant churches.<sup>6</sup>

Nor is the movement for unity confined to bodies of the same denominational family. Already the possibilities of larger union are visualized, and in the new churches of the East the ideal of a united national church is gaining increasing momentum. In South India the proposed union, if consummated, will include Christians of the Catholic as well as of the Protestant type of experience, and with this consummation a precedent will be set of incalculable significance for the future.<sup>7</sup>

A third thing which is immediately practicable, and

<sup>6</sup> In his book *Church Unity Movements in the United States* (New York, 1934), p. 51, Doctor H. Paul Douglass has given an account of the mergers which have been successfully accomplished during the present century. Considering these mergers by decades the number has increased as follows: one in 1900-1909, three in 1910-1919, four in 1920-29, and three since 1930. Since 1920 the following unions have been consummated: the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, into the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.; the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church into the Evangelical Church; the Reformed Church in the U. S. and the Hungarian Reformed in America into the Reformed Church in the U. S. A.; the Congregational and the Evangelical Protestant Churches into the Congregational Church; the Congregational and the Christian (General Convention) Churches into the Congregational-Christian Church; the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and other States, the Lutheran Synod of Buffalo, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and other States into the American Lutheran Church; the Reformed Church in the U. S. and the Evangelical Synod of N. A. into the Evangelical and Reformed Churches.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. "Church Union in Southern India," a symposium in *The Review of the Churches* (January, 1930), pp. 24-110; "Church Union in South India," an article in *The Christian Union Quarterly* (January, 1934), pp. 14-22, by Bannings, John J.; Manshardt, Clifford, "Christianity in a Changing India" (Calcutta, 1933), esp. Chap. IX, "Church Union," pp. 183-210.

one which may prove in the long run to be of even greater significance is that the colleges and theological schools of the different churches should provide for systematic instruction in the beliefs, practices, and types of religious experience of the other Christian bodies. If there is any single fact which stands out above the others as the outcome of our study it is that one of the greatest obstacles to the consummation of the union of Christ's church is that the rank and file of Christians are ignorant of the spiritual values in any other type of religious experience than their own, and are therefore all but completely indifferent to any proposal for a larger unity.

For this the teaching which they have received from their ministers is largely responsible, and this in turn goes back to the teaching which they have received in their theological schools.

The present writer has been for many years a teacher of theology in a school which not only bears the name of Union but was committed by its founders to the high ideal of serving as a centre of instruction for all denominations of Christians.<sup>8</sup> It is a school which to a greater extent than many others has taken its charter obligations seriously, and has had the privilege of gathering within its walls, both as teachers and students, representatives of all the larger and many of the smaller Protestant denominations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Its charter provides that "equal privileges of admission and instruction, with all the advantages of the Institution, shall be allowed to students of every denomination of Christians."

<sup>9</sup> At the present time approximately thirty denominations are represented among its students and seven denominations among its faculty.

In such a school surely it ought to be the obvious duty of every teacher to promote the sympathetic understanding of the different types of Christian experience. Yet the writer must confess with shame that he had been teaching theology for many years before he came to realize that it was his duty to help his students to a sympathetic understanding of the type of religious experience found in Catholic Christianity. It was not prejudice which was the cause of the omission so much as the pressure of other competing interests, and above all the lack of a vivid appreciation of the importance of such sympathetic understanding for the successful prosecution of the work of the Christian Church.

A recent study of Protestant theological education<sup>10</sup> in the United States has convinced the author that his experience is not an isolated one. No more important task is laid upon the Protestant Theological Schools of America than to provide for sympathetic instruction in the life of contemporary Catholicism. Is it too much to hope that not Protestants only will lay this need to heart, but that similar provision may be made in Catholic schools for the sympathetic interpretation of the highest ideals of Protestantism?

Such a sympathetic study of the different types of Christian experience would have as a useful by-product a clearer definition of the type of teaching and action which is appropriate for the church as a whole as distinct from that which is incumbent upon those

<sup>10</sup> May, Mark A., Shuttleworth, Frank K., Brown, W. Adams, *The Education of American Ministers* (New York, 1934).

individuals or groups in all the churches who, not content with accepted standards, are eager to try new experiments in the application of Christian principles to the problems of contemporary life. For such forward-looking groups there must always be a place in the church, but it is important to distinguish the theories they hold and the policies they advocate—the raw material of the teaching and practice of the future—from those basic convictions tested by the experience of the centuries which constitute the witness of the church in every age.

One thing more we need to do, and that is to take more seriously our opportunities for common worship. It is through prayer that our contact with God is most immediate. It is to common prayer, therefore, that we must look for the dynamic we need.

Nothing has surprised the writer more in his attendance at the various ecumenical gatherings than the comparatively small amount of time assigned to meetings for common worship. If it be true, as all Christians agree, that the supreme function of the church is that of worship, and that it is only through the practice of prayer that the will of God is finally to be revealed, one would expect that the major purpose of any gathering for the sake of promoting Christian unity would be to wait before God in united prayer. Yet too often the introductory half hour spent in prayer—a half hour often attended by only a part of the delegates—impresses the participant as but an introduction to the real business of the meeting, the speeches that are to follow.

The writer would be the last to underestimate the sincerity and spiritual profit of the religious services which have introduced and accompanied the great ecumenical conferences. The impression remains that something has been lacking, an overmastering sense of the nearness of the living God who, if the hearts of his worshippers were but open, might still have great things to say to his church.

This sense of expectancy, so notable in the gatherings of the first Christians, one too often misses in the church today. Yet for us as for them the same divine resource is available if we follow the method which has preceded all the great revivals of religion, the systematic practice of concerted prayer.

#### 4. THE ULTIMATE DYNAMIC

It is in the rediscovery of the meaning and the power of prayer that our hope lies. Prayer is not the repetition of words, however ancient or sacred; it is not concentration upon self, even our highest and best self; prayer in its deepest and truest meaning, as Jesus has taught us to understand it, and as it has been practised by those who have drunk most deeply of his spirit, is first-hand contact with the living God. It is consciousness of God as the most certain of facts, joy in God as the realization of the highest of values, commitment of self to God as the final authority: this is what our age needs, and the church most of all, as the servant of our age. Here

we must find our ultimate dynamic. Only through this unifying experience can we hope to attain a united church.

It is to such prayer that God is calling his church today—not to a flight from the world to some oasis of inward certainty and peace, but to service to the world through the contagious witness of an unconquerable faith. This is the summons which comes to us out of the very need of the time, from the sense of loneliness and desolation in human hearts deprived of the security in which they trusted, from the bewilderment that follows the breakdown of familiar standards in the presence of unforeseen and unanswered questions, most of all from the challenge of an aggressive secularism that in the name of human progress would throw overboard as outworn superstitions the painfully won treasures of historic religion. In experiences such as these God is revealing to his church the insufficiency of any merely human resources—humanity's need of the kind of faith which in an age not less perplexed and shaken than our own first brought the church to birth.

Signs are not wanting that in many different quarters this need is being recognized and this call is being heard. Again, as so often in the past, God is making his presence evident to the eye of faith. The response which is being given to the appeal of personal religion as it is presented in the Group Movement, the rediscovery of the self-revealing God as it comes to us in Barth's theology, the reviving church consciousness of which the Anglo-Catholic movement

is a sign: these are but a few of many indications that God is again making his presence felt in the life of our time.

It is not surprising that in such a world and in the light of such experiences Christians who have hitherto held aloof from one another should be coming closer together. There is no surer way to sympathy than the discovery of a common need. Of all the signs of this significant time none is more revealing than the drawing together of Catholics and Protestants. Wherever we look we see fresh indications of it. In Germany, Roman Catholics and Protestants, faced by a reviving paganism, are discovering that the things which they hold in common are more important than the things which separate them. The same lesson is being taught by events in Mexico, where, because of past wrongs committed in the name of religion, Catholics and Protestants alike are restricted in the present practice of their religion. Most clearly of all the lesson is brought home in Russia, where every form of Christianity—Orthodox, Roman, and Protestant alike—finds itself threatened by an aggressive atheism.

In the face of crises such as these the Christian church has an opportunity to realize in *fact* the brotherhood of love which she preaches. The attack of a militant secularism has not come upon the church without cause. It is because in the days when the church was all-powerful she was proud while she preached humility, selfish while she inculcated generosity, tyrannous while she talked of justice, divided when she spoke of brotherhood—that men, weary of



such hyprocrisy, have turned to other guides. Let the church become again what in the mind of God she was meant to be—humble, unselfish, loving, united—and she will once more win her way to the confidence and affection of mankind.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It would not be strange if after such a lengthy survey of the complicated and puzzling situation in which the Christian church finds itself today, some of our readers should be left with a feeling resembling despair. What can any solitary actor do in this vast and momentous drama which can influence in any significant way the ultimate issue?

Such a feeling is entirely natural, but it is mistaken. There are some things which each one of us can do without which the wisest plans will suffer shipwreck and the most ardent hopes remain unfulfilled.

Each one of us can fix his attention upon the one central fact that matters for the church and for the world: the fact of the living God who in Jesus Christ has given us the answer to humanity's need. In the midst of the darkness that surrounds us we can find at this focal point an unquenchable light.

We can centre our attention upon Jesus Christ, and we can make him our guide in daily living. What may happen in Geneva next month, or in Lausanne next year, is not our immediate responsibility. But we *can* help to determine what is to happen in

our own church or in our own community tomorrow. Here is a responsibility which we cannot evade. By making Christ's will our guide in the place where God has put us today we are contributing directly to the unity of Christ's church. For the great church is just what we individual Christians will to make it, or rather are willing that God should make it through us.

We can do one thing more. We can remember that what we have seen of God's will for his church millions of simple Christians the world over are seeing too. We can definitely resolve that from this time forth whenever we hear of any one who is making Christ the supreme object of his loyalty, whether he be Catholic or Protestant, German or American, high-churchman or evangelical, liberal or conservative, we shall think of him as our brother; fellow-worker and fellow-worshipper with us in the one undivided life of Christ's church.

The church of Christ, so Catholics and Protestants alike believe, is the fellowship which the Spirit of God is bringing to pass in the hearts of men and women who love Christ and who have enlisted in his service. But there is one condition of Christian discipleship which cannot be evaded. One must give oneself without reserve.

A returning traveller, who has had many recent contacts with the young people of different countries, thus summed up his impression of their attitude. "If you hope to reach the young today," he said, "you must not speak to them of security. You must

not promise them ease. Safety is not what they want. Tell them of risks to be run. Tell them of sacrifices to be made. Offer them a cause which asks all, and more than all, that man has to give, and you have a chance to win them. At no lesser price are they to be had."

We who have enlisted in the service of Christ's church have a cause which requires all and more than all that man can give. It is the cause of him who said to the young people of his day, and who is still saying to us today: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."<sup>1</sup>

It is to such service that the church invites. It is through such fellowship alone that it can achieve its end. Corporate unity is important; how important we are only beginning to realize. But in the last analysis it is a by-product of something deeper and more precious—a unity of spirit which makes the church in fact one. Where this inner unity is lacking we may have a body indeed, but it will be a body without a soul. Let this inner unity be achieved and the appropriate instrument for its effective expression will not long be lacking.

At the first meeting of the World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, Bishop Brent uttered this significant word: "The world is too strong for a divided church." Were he with us in physical presence

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 16:24-25.

today, as we know that he is with us in spirit, we may be sure that he would not stop there. He would complete his sentence with this confident affirmation: "Against a united church no foe can prevail."



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